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Early Christian missions of
Ireland, Scotland, and

EARLY CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

TRIA JUNCTA IN UNO.

EARLY CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

OF

IRELAND, SCOTLAND, AND ENGLAND.

BY

MRS. RUNDLE CHARLES,

AUTHOR OF "THE CHRONICLES OF THE SCHÖNBERG COTTA FAMILY,"
"THREE MARTYRS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY," ETC.

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TO
My Mother

WHOSE LIFE
WAS MY CONTINUAL HELP,
WHOSE DEAR MEMORY AND IMMORTAL LIFE
ARE MY INSPIRATION ALWAYS.

CONTENTS.

					PAGE
INTRODUCTION	...	...	...	...	9
ST. PATRICK ...	...	...	...	...	17
ST. COLUMBA	...	...	...	...	83
IONA AND ENGLAND :					
ST. AIDAN	...	...	...	...	165
ST. HILDA	...	...	...	...	193
ST. COLMAN	...	...	...	...	213
ST. CHAD	...	...	...	...	226
ST. CUTHBERT	...	...	...	...	237
MISSIONS OF IRELAND AND ENGLAND IN EUROPE :					
ST. COLUMBAN	...	...	...	...	251
ST. BONIFACE, APOSTLE OF GERMANY			...	...	309
ST. MARGARET, QUEEN OF SCOTLAND			...	...	353
CONCLUSION ...	...	...	...	...	415

“IL y a dans l'Europe, à sept lieues de la France, en vue de nos plages du nord, un peuple dont l'empire est plus vaste que celui d'Alexandre ou des Césars, et qui est à la fois le plus libre et le plus puissant, le plus riche et le plus viril, le plus audacieux et le plus réglé qui soit au monde. Aucun peuple n'offre une étude aussi instructive, un aspect aussi original, des contrastes aussi étranges. . . .

Aussi mobile que pas un dans ses affections et ses jugements, mais sachant presque toujours se contenir et s'arrêter à temps, il est doué à la fois d'une initiative que rien n'étonne et d'une persévérance que rien n'abat. Avide de conquêtes et de découvertes il erre et court aux extrémités de la terre, puis revient plus épris que jamais du foyer domestique, plus jaloux d'en assurer la dignité et la durée séculaire. Ennemi implacable de la contrainte, il est l'esclave volontaire de la tradition et de la discipline librement acceptée, ou d'un préjugé héréditairement transmis. Nul peuple n'a été plus souvent conquis, nul n'a su mieux absorber et transformer ses conquérants.

Ni l'égoïsme parfois sauvage de ces insulaires ni leur indifférence trop souvent cynique pour les douleurs et la servitude d'autrui ne doivent nous faire oublier que là, plus que partout ailleurs, l'homme s'appartient à lui-même et se gouverne lui-même. C'est là que la noblesse de notre nature a développé toute sa splendeur et atteint son niveau le plus élevé. C'est là que la passion généreuse de l'indépendance, unie au génie de l'association, et à la pratique constante de l'empire de soi, ont enfanté ces prodiges d'énergie acharnée, d'indomptable vigueur, et d'héroïsme opiniâtre qui ont triomphé des mers et des climats, du temps et de la distance, de la nature et de la tyrannie, en excitant la perpétuelle envie de tous les peuples, et l'orgueilleuse enthousiasme des Anglais. Aimant la liberté pour elle-

même, et n'aimant rien sans elle, ce peuple ne doit rien à ses rois, qui n'ont été quelque chose que par lui et pour lui. . . . Il sait vouloir et agir pour lui-même ; gouvernant, soulevant, inspirant ses grands hommes, au lieu d'être séduit, égaré ou exploité par eux. Cette race anglaise a succédé à l'orgueil comme à la grandeur du peuple dont elle est l'émule et l'héritière, du peuple romain ; j'entends les vrais Romains de la République, non les vils Romains asservis et dépravés par Auguste. Comme les Romains envers leurs tributaires, elle a été féroce et cupide envers l'Irlande, infligeant aussi à sa victime, jusqu'en les derniers temps, la servitude et l'abaissement qu'elle répudie avec horreur pour elle-même. . . Mais plus heureuse que Rome, après mille ans et plus elle est encore jeune et féconde. Un progrès lent, obscur, mais ininterrompu lui a créé un fonds inépuisable de force et de vie. Chez elle la sève débordait hier et débordera demain. Plus heureuse que Rome, malgré mille inconséquences, mille excès, mille souillures, elle est de toutes les races modernes, et de toutes les nations chrétiennes celle qui a le mieux conservé les trois bases fondamentales de toute société digne de l'homme : l'esprit de liberté, l'esprit de famille et l'esprit religieux.

Comment cette nation, où survit et triomphe un orgueil tout païen, et qui n'en est pas moins restée jusqu'au sein de l'erreur la plus religieuse de toutes les nations de l'Europe, comment est elle devenue chrétienne ? Comment et par quelles mains le christianisme y a-t-il jeté de si indestructibles racines ? Question capitale, à coup sûr, parmi les plus capitales de l'histoire, et dont l'intérêt éclate et redouble quand on songe que de la conversion de l'Angleterre a dépendu et dépend encore la conversion de tant de million d'âmes.

Le christianisme Anglais a été le berceau du christianisme de l'Allemagne ; des missionnaires formés par les Anglo-Saxons ont porté la foi en Scandinavie et chez les Slaves, et chaque jour à l'heure qu'il est, soit par la féconde ex-

pansion de l'orthodoxie irlandaise, soit par l'impulsion obstinée de la propagande protestante, il se crée des chrétiens qui parlent anglais et vivent à l'anglaise dans toute l'Amérique du nord, dans les deux Indes, dans l'immense Australie, et dans les îles de l'océan Pacifique. C'est presque une moitié du monde dont le christianisme découlé ou découlera de la source qui a jailli sur le sol britannique."—MONTALEMBERT, *Moines de l'Occident*, F. III. ch. i.

INTRODUCTION.

THE well-known and magnificent tribute to our country from M. de Montalembert, which I have quoted as an Introduction to these pages, in which the most sympathetic appreciation is made more emphatic through being tempered by regret and blame, begins with these words—"There is in Europe, seven leagues from France, in sight of our northern shores, a people of which the Empire is vaster than that of Alexander or of the Cæsars, and which is at once the most free and the most powerful, the richest and the most manly, the most daring and the most regulated in the world. No people presents a study so instructive, an aspect so original, contrasts so strange. Happier than Rome, after a thousand

years and more she is still young and still fertile. With her the living sap overflowed yesterday, and will overflow to-morrow. In spite of a thousand inconsistencies, stains, excesses, she, of all modern races, of all Christian nations, is the one that has best preserved the three fundamental bases of all society worthy of man—the spirit of liberty, the spirit of the family, the spirit of religion.

“The question how the Christianity which has struck such indestructible roots was planted, by what hands, and in what way, is among the most capital questions of history. . . . It is well-nigh half the world, of which the Christianity flows and will flow from the fountain which has sprung up on the soil of Britain.”

“No country presents a study so instructive, an aspect so original, contrasts so strange”—“still young and fertile after more than a thousand years.” And how much of the interest of this study, this individuality of character, the vividness of these contrasts, the secret of this inexhaustible youth springs from the fact that we are not one, but three : three, and yet one—*Tria juncta in Uno!* With at least three original sources,—however in remoter antiquity the

streams may again be seen to blend in one,—with three national histories distinct and often fiercely antagonistic, yet continually interacting and reuniting with each other; three national characters distinct as national characters well can be, and therefore able to supplement each other as only contrasted characters can; set apart from the rest of the world in what were virtually for long periods, through divisions of mountains, and rivers and seas, three separate islands; yet linked to each other irrevocably as none else could be, and all separated from the mainland of Europe. The many misunderstandings and oppressions with which we have too often weakened and impoverished each other have never been able entirely to spoil the unity in diversity which made us strong to confront the world, and to enrich it. The differences which make us distinct can never be obliterated, and none of us would wish it. Not “like in like, but like in difference,” is the keynote of all fruitful union. It is this free play of many forces, this crossing of many currents, which keeps the national life fresh and fertile. We cannot abandon the hope that the great national qualities which make the differences may

more and more interact, so as to supplement and not to maim each other. And it seems as if few things could better contribute to such an aim than to live for a time in an age when the qualities of the various races did thus actually work together, and in rotation, through the power of Christian faith and charity, each for the infinite good of the rest.

There was an age when these nations reciprocated the priceless gifts of Christianity with each other. And it is on this we will look now; it is this age which I wish to picture in these pages. The story of the Missions of Ireland to Scotland, and through Scotland to England; of Scotland to England, from Northumbria to Dorsetshire; of England to Saxony; and again to Scotland. These Missions are incarnate in great Missionaries, in Saints of the most original and varied and typically national characters, and many of them have the advantage of contemporary, or almost contemporary, biography. There are the Missions of St. Columba to and from Iona; of St. Columban in Burgundy and Italy, and of St. Gall in Switzerland; the Missions of St. Aidan, St. Cuthbert, St. Chad, and St. Columba from Scotland, from St. Columba's Iona, to Eng-

land ; and finally the Missions of the Devonshire St. Boniface to Saxony ; and of Margaret, Saint and Queen, sister of Edgar Atheling and wife of Malcolm Canmore, among her husband's people.

Tria juncta in Uno. The three have been joined in one, for endless benediction to each other and the world. Unconsciously, sometimes reluctantly, through all the subsequent misunderstandings and strifes, they have no doubt through Divine over-ruling still worked together, even during the discords of centuries. May it yet be that each and all of us may work harmoniously and consciously together ; trying to comprehend each other in the Presence and the Light of the Christ who comprehends us all, of the Christianity which is adequate for us all.

The story naturally begins, as it happens, with the Missions of the nation which since those early days has, through the confusions and collisions of conflicting interests, secular and ecclesiastical, had least opportunity of showing as a nation, on the field of history, the brilliant intellectual gifts, the lofty moral qualities, the intense spiritual force and intuition manifested in those times.

The initiative in those early missions is with Ireland.

ST. PATRICK.



ST. PATRICK.

I.

WE might begin with St. Columba, the first great Irish Missionary. But to understand St. Columba we must go back to the world he was born in, the Christianity he was trained in, the world St. Patrick had so much to do with moulding, the Christianity he had so large a part in translating for Ireland. We all know of course that

“St. Patrick was a gentleman,
And born of decent people.”

But where he was born, who these very respectable parents were, have been points much in dispute. The existence and mighty influence of St. Patrick could not be doubted, but his biographies seemed for some time in a very liquid state, liable therefore to be evaporated into shifting clouds of legend, or frozen into capital for the various sections of ecclesiastical conviction.

But there are few things more encouraging than the restoration to the region of fact, by patient investigation, of many stories which had been languidly relegated to a kind of religious fairyland. In history, as elsewhere, it is laziness which is destructive. Really "honest doubt" means earnest inquiry; means belief that *truth exists*, and is to be found. The question of fastidious or cynical sceptics, "*What is Truth?*" which wins no reply from the lips of the Truth Himself, is very different from the question, "*What is true?*"

The Nineveh and Babylon, Egypt and Assyria of our own times are substantial and living indeed compared with the dreamy haze or the dry letters which they meant a hundred years ago. And so with St. Patrick and many of the Saints. They had become dim "shades" in a dim world where it is always twilight. Their very names are scarcely to be found in many ecclesiastical histories, any more than those of Jack the Giant-Killer or the Seven Champions of Christendom. They are respectfully laid to rest in books of devotional edification, where the lesson is as derivable from allegory as from fact. Especially this has been the case with St. Patrick. There

has been such a wide growth of legend around his story as to choke the story. And in stripping away the legend, you are apt to make a mere antiquarian skeleton of the story. As with the carefully cleared palaces and baths in modern Rome, you are apt, after the clearing, to feel as if you were in a mere museum of antiquities, instead of on the actual sites of great events, and in the real homes of men once living. It requires a greater effort of imagination to recall the old life among those swept floors, those clean, bare walls, than when they were veiled and decorated by the luxuriant leaves and flowers.

The destruction of the beauty has left us only the bricks. The old palaces were real; the work of Time and Nature was real, but this antiquarian clearing leaves you, it almost seems, face to face, neither with history nor Nature, but with ruin. And yet the clearing is necessary for the mere preservation of the ruin. The work of the antiquarian and of the critic are of course necessary to history, necessary and fruitful if only regarded as the first step. The blending of garden and ruin, of tree and shrub, rooted in the crumbling stones, and enriching them with flowers, was once a whole, a new creation, beau-

tiful in itself, with bowers of greenery, where love could dream and children play. But when all this is cleared away, and the work of knife and axe are done, historical imagination takes possession, and you have a living whole again. The ancient halls and palace chambers stand out once more peopled as of old.

And happily in historical investigation the critical axe and knife destroy neither the bricks nor the flowers, neither the fact nor the legend. The fact, the biography, the human life are there : the legendary stories which grew out of the power and exuberance of its life are also there ; also, in a sense historical, witnessing to the power and richness of the life, on which they fed. With St. Patrick the co-operation of criticism and historical imagination seems to have been especially reconstructive.

To begin with, he is Ireland's St. Patrick, related to his country as scarcely any other Patron Saint. England has transferred her allegiance from her martyr St. Alban to St. George and his dragon myth ; Scotland had recourse to very solid ground among the Apostles. But Ireland never strayed from her first allegiance, and is therefore quite at home with her Saint.

Neither England nor Scotland ever dreamt of taking the affectionate filial liberties with their Patrons, which are ventured on by "Pat," or "Paddy from Cork."

St. Andrew, of course, belongs to all Christendom as well as to Scotland; and England having lost hold of her own martyred St. Alban, fell into very wild country, in Cappadocia. But Ireland herself is at once the theatre and the trophy of her own Saint. He belongs to her altogether, as she to him.

Antiquarians may perplex themselves with seven St. Patricks; the Irish nation, with true national instinct, has but one. Whoever else may have aided him in her service before he came to Ireland, or while he lived there, or after he had died there,—however much others may have seemed his equals while they were near, in the perspective of the centuries the little hills are lowered, and the real mountains tower to their true height. St. Patrick indeed belongs altogether to Ireland, and she to him.

And yet she owes him to the other island, and so the circle of the electric current is complete. You may take its beginning at one point or another. From Britain to Ireland the vivifying

stream flows—from Ireland to Scotland, and from Scotland to England, and from England again to Scotland.

It is sometimes possible to reconstruct much of the character of the artist from his works. But with St. Patrick we are not left to prove his existence by the work he left behind him, or by the devotion of the nation which owed its Christianity to him. We have two writings of his own, admitted to be genuine, the *Confession*, and his *Epistle to Coroticus*, in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin. There is a manuscript of the *Confession*, more than a thousand years old, which professes to have been taken from an autograph of St. Patrick himself.

Of St. Patrick's *Confession* his biographer, Dr. Todd, writes:—"It is altogether such an account of himself as a missionary of that age, circumstanced as St. Patrick was, might be expected to compose. The Latinity is rude and archaic; it quotes the Ante-Hieronymic Vulgate; and contains nothing inconsistent with the century in which it professes to have been written. If it be a forgery it is not easy to imagine with what purpose it could have been forged." To this the Rev. G. T. Stokes (in Smith's *Dictionary of*

Christian Biography) adds:—"This is strong testimony, but it might have been made stronger, and applies as clearly to the *Epistle to Coroticus* as to the *Confession*.

"There are two other lines (besides the archaic character of the language and the quotation from the evensong before the Vulgate) which seem to be conclusive as to the early date of the *Confession*—the *State organization* and the *ecclesiastical organization* thereon implied. These are both such as existed in the beginning of the fifth century, and could scarcely have been imagined afterwards. Let us take the State organization first. In the *Epistle to Coroticus* he describes himself thus—'Ingenuus fui secundum carnem: Decurione patre nascor.'

"Recent investigations into the antiquities of the Roman Empire show that Decurions, who are not magistrates, but councillors and members of the local Senate, were found all over the Roman Empire to its extremest bounds by the end of the fourth century.

"Again, the *Confession* speaks of England as 'the *Britanniæ*' (in the plural), in accordance with the technical usage at the close of the fourth century, which divides Britain into five

Britanniæ. Then again, ecclesiastical organization is such as the date 400 also would supply.

“St. Patrick tells us in the opening words of the *Confession* that his father was Calpurnius, a deacon; his grandfather, Potitus, a priest. It is evident that the law of compulsory clerical celibacy was unknown to him, whilst it is also clear that a monastic life was popular.” (Or if this were questioned, it seems clear that such a clerical descent would not have been *invented* at a subsequent date.) “Again, the aspect of the political world is such as corresponds with the alleged date. In the *Epistle to Coroticus*, Patrick says it is the custom of the Roman Gallic Christians to send holy men fitted for the work, to the Franks and other nations, with many thousand *solidi* to redeem baptized captives. But by the end of the fifth century the Franks had been converted. Clovis, King of the Franks, was the one orthodox sovereign of Christendom. The redemption of Christian captives among the heathen Franks would therefore no longer now be needed. This passage could only have been written in the middle of the fifth century at latest. These instances will show how capable St. Patrick’s

own writings are of standing the test of modern historical criticism.”¹

And so we may take St. Patrick for granted, and endeavour to learn what he was, and said and did. If, as some think probable, he was born at Kirkpatrick, near Dumbarton, on the Clyde, his early days must have been spent among the creeks and inlet rocks and mountains not far from the scene of St. Columba's labours, a hundred years afterwards. But if this is disproved, it is at all events clear that he was born in some part of Britain. His family were Gallo-Roman. Montalembert accepts the tradition which connects them with St. Martin of Tours. All these interlinkings with different lands indicate that the Roman Empire, shattered as it was, still gave a kind of unity to Europe.

St. Patrick's father, then, was a Roman Decurion—a man of influence in the local government so wonderfully organized by Rome. He was also a man of landed property. St. Patrick was brought up on his father's farm. “I, Patrick, a sinner,” he writes, in the *Confession*; “the rudest, and least of all the faithful, and the

¹ Rev. G. T. Stokes, in Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, and in *Ireland and the Celtic Church*.

most despicable among most men, had for my father, Calpurnius, a deacon, son of the late Potitus, a presbyter, who was of the town Bonaven Taberniæ, for he had a farm in its neighbourhood."

Personally he would humble himself in the dust; but to be a "gentleman, and born of decent people," was an advantage it was due to his kindred not to conceal, especially as those early prospects were so soon darkened. And he certainly has succeeded in impressing the fact upon posterity.

Civil and ecclesiastical dignities were combined in his family. Professor Stokes gives us other instances of this from inscriptions at Ancyra, and Assos in Asia Minor. The Decurions were clothed with the authority of the Empire, "had charge of the games, water-supply, sanitary arrangements, education, local fortifications." As deacons and presbyters, they must have also ruled and served the Church.

From what he says, however, in his *Confession*, his own life was not moved early by Christian teaching. "We had gone back from His commandments," he writes, "and had not been obedient to our priests, who used to warn

us for our salvation. And the Lord brought upon us the wrath of His displeasure, and scattered us among many nations.”

He lived on his father's property until he was sixteen; and then came one of those piratical raids on the sea-coast so terribly common during those centuries of decay and violence and migration; and the boy was carried to the opposite coast of Ireland. He became one of the slaves of Milchu, King of the Dalriads, then the most powerful kingdom in the north-east of Ireland, extending from Newry in County Down, to the mountain of Slemish in Antrim. Tradition still marks the spot where he herded the King's swine, on a farm called Ballyligpatrick—“the town of the hollow of Patrick”—near the village of Broughshane, five or six miles east of Ballymena.

Thousands, he says, were taken captive about the same time. And there, at that farm in the hollow of the Antrim hills, the spiritual history of St. Patrick seems to have begun. The King of that country sent him into the fields to keep swine; and there, among the acorns and husks of the ancient oak forests, he woke to find he had been feeding his soul on husks, and need do so no more.

While feeding his swine on the acorns on which they could feed, he awoke to the discovery that for him there was indeed a Father watching, while he had been still afar off, and waiting to bless; a Father's Home and bread of immortal life close at hand, "enough and to spare." "I knew not the true God," he writes. "And there the Lord opened the sense of my unbelief, that even though late" (it seemed late to him, though he was only sixteen), "I should remember my sin, and be converted with my whole heart to the Lord my God, who had regard to my loneliness, and had compassion on my youth and my ignorance, and preserved me before I knew, and before I could distinguish between good and evil, and protected me and comforted me as a father would a son."

All the Christian teaching of his early years, dormant till then, blossomed in his heart. In captivity his spirit found freedom; the mountain and oaks and forest glades became a home and a temple to him. He writes his story, he says, "to spread confidence in God among his brothers in Gaul and Britain and his sons in Ireland." And beautiful and inspiring the story is, and fresh to us to-day as to his

brothers and sons fourteen hundred years ago.

“When I came to Ireland, I used daily to keep the cattle, and often every day to pray; and the fear and the love of God were ever more and more increased in me, and my faith increased, so that in the day I spake a hundred times in prayer, and in the nights often; and even when I passed the night on the mountains, and in the forests, amidst snow, and frost, and rain, I would watch before daylight to pray, and I felt no discomfort. There was then no laziness such as I find in my heart now, for the spirit was ever burning within me.”

Picture the bright young boy, with the swine grubbing and grunting around him, among the brushwood and the roots of the old oaks, or under the snows, face to face with Nature in her wild solitude, braving cold and hunger, and perils day and night, and meantime not merely dreaming of heaven and the future, but herding his cattle faithfully to the best pastures; all the while leading the common life of servitude and toil and hardship, yet all the while also heaven open to him, and his free and royal spirit walking about its golden streets, conversing as a child with his Father in heaven.

What a training for his future, learning to share the common toils of common men, proving the power of soul over circumstance, learning through and above all to "know the true God!"

This lasted six years, from his sixteenth year till he was twenty-two, long enough to engrave the lessons deep on heart and mind.

After six years he heard in a dream a voice which said, "Thy fasting is well, thou shalt soon return to thy country."

And again in another dream the same voice told him the ship was ready for him two hundred miles away. There is much of dreams and visions and heavenly voices in St. Patrick's life, and openings into mysterious regions, reminding one of the histories of the early Friends and Methodists.

He obeyed that voice and fled from his captivity. "I went in the power of the Lord," he writes, "who directed my way for good, and I feared nothing till I arrived at that ship." The captain, however, roughly refused him a passage; but Patrick prayed, and his prayer was not finished, when one of the sailors called to him to come back quickly, "for these men call thee."

They were three days at sea. It sounds more like a voyage in the far-off Pacific than in the Irish Channel; but no doubt the Irish Channel was a perilous voyage to the small craft of those days. It is perilous enough around the coasts of Cornwall now, and among the wreck-strewn channels between the Scilly Islands. They were three days at sea, and afterwards twenty-eight days in "a desert place," till their provisions ran short. Then the leader of the party said to him, "What sayest thou, Christian? Thy God is great and all-powerful; why then canst thou not pray to Him for us? for we perish with hunger and can find no inhabitant."

Patrick answered—

"Turn ye in faith to my Lord God, to whom nothing is impossible, and He will send you food, and ye shall be satisfied, for He has abundance everywhere."

And a herd of swine soon after appeared, of which they killed many. They found also some wild honey. But because some of them had said, "This is an offering, thank God," Patrick would not taste of it, fearing that it had been offered to an idol.

But in the midst of his voyages and adventures

his spirit went on her own voyages in the spiritual world.

“That same night,” he says, “an event occurred which I could never forget. I felt as if a great stone had fallen on me. I was unable to move a limb, but I called ‘Helias’ with all my might.” (Probably an allusion to the “*Eli, Eli!*” on the Cross.) “How it came into my mind, I know not, but lo! the brightness of the sun fell upon me, and straightway removed all the weight, and I am persuaded I was relieved by Christ my Lord, and that His Spirit then cried out for me.”

He was liberated from his slavery and captivity in Ireland. But there were captivities also for the spirit, and liberations. And such a liberation into fresh power of light and love, that night in the desert place seems to have brought to him.

There is an inner history running parallel with the outer life of St. Patrick’s *Confession*—the inner life more real than the outer—the land of the true fountains and brooks, whence the heroic achievement and steadfast work and ever-growing love of the visible life were watered. And there is a curious unusualness in the way

these inner experiences are related. He seems to be making spiritual voyages of discovery, as if no one had preceded him in regions since then much mapped out in religious biography, just as, in the body, he lighted on untrodden deserts, even amidst the familiar waters of the Irish and British Channels.

He seems to have spent the next years of his life with his parents in England—(in one of the *Britanniæ*).

The Legends and Biographies vary in the story of this interval between his liberation from captivity and his missionary work in Ireland. In his *Confession* he speaks only of being in Britain. Montalembert, following some of the biographers, mentions his resuming and finishing his studies in the two greatest monasteries of the West—Marmoutier near Marseilles, and the Isle of Lerins; his accompanying St. Germain of Auxerre to Great Britain to oppose the Pelagian heresy. He speaks of himself in the *Confession* as “ignorant, slow of speech, rustic, a fugitive, and moreover unlearned.” “Hear, then, and inquire who has stirred me up, who am a fool, out of the midst of those who are esteemed wise. It was God, provided that, if I were worthy, I should

during my life faithfully labour with fear and reverence, without murmuring, for the good of the nation to which the love of Christ transferred and gave me; in fine, that I should serve them with humility and truth.”

But the most significant moment in those years was that which he records in his *Confession*; another event in his spiritual history which was the inspiration of what he was and did. “There ” (while in the Britannia, with his parents) “in the dead of night I saw ” (in a dream, or vision, as recorded of St. Paul in the Acts) “a man coming unto me as if from Hiberio ” (his name for Ireland), “whose name was Victoricus, bearing innumerable epistles. And he gave me one of them, and I read the beginning of it, which contained the words, ‘*The voice of the Irish.*’ And while I was repeating the beginning of the epistle, I imagined that I heard in my mind the voice of those who were near the Wood of Fochlut, which is near the Western Sea. And thus they cried—‘*We pray thee, holy youth, to come and henceforth walk amongst us.*’ And I was greatly pricked in heart, and could read no more, and so I awoke. Thanks be to God that after very many years the

Lord granted unto them according to their cry.”

This must have been soon after his liberation. The preparation for his work in Gaul and elsewhere may have filled up the many subsequent years, which seem to have been years of much trial and many hardships.

But in the hidden life lay the inspiration and the explanation of the act. It seems probable to those who have weighed the evidence carefully, that St. Patrick may have learned much from the great monastic institutions of Gaul, that he may have accompanied St. Germain of Auxerre and St. Loup on the Mission to England, which has left traces in the names of churches in Cornwall and Wales. Himself the son of a Roman official, and linked with a Romano-Gallic family, there can be nothing incredible in his having visited Rome, the Rome of the martyrs, and having there received sympathy and sanction from Pope Celestine for the Mission to the far-off island the Roman Empire had never annexed or touched. These external historical links give solidity to the deeper history within. But there is no allusion to them in his own writings.

To him the years of captivity in the flesh were

years of liberation in the spirit. It was among the swine and in the wild forests that his eyes were opened to the heavenly vision. And after his liberation his heart was opened to the sorrows and needs of the heathen people around him. Their needs touched him, and his life had reached them. "*The voice of the Irish*" never died out of his heart. The cry of the needy was to him the call of God.

It is not so much the circumstances as the conquest of circumstances which give the especial interest to the life of St. Patrick, as indeed of all the Saints; since saintliness, whatever else it means, must mean victory over the peculiar temptations of the society in which the Saint lives. Herding swine might have assimilated him to the swine; it did help to assimilate him to the angels. Slavery might have enslaved his spirit; it did bring liberation to his spirit, introducing him to the Heavenly City, "which is free and the Mother of us all;" to the Son, who makes those He liberates "free indeed." Return to prosperity from hardship and bondage might have led him to prize more than ever the ease and pleasures he had lost and found again; it did give him leisure to enter more deeply than before

into the sufferings of those still in the bonds of slavery, and the harder bonds of ignorance and sin.

It is significant for Ireland, with her centuries of oppression and wrong, to have as her Patron Saint one from whom wrongs drew not resentment but sympathy, who by the power of the Cross transmuted the bitter waters into sweet, and curse into blessing.

II.

THE two things we naturally want to know of the great Irish Missionary are, what St. Patrick found in Ireland, and what he brought to it. It is a country whose literature, like its history, seems sometimes a confused scene of factions and contradictions. There is the dispute as to how much Christianity had reached Ireland before St. Patrick, and from what source. There is the dispute as to the pagan customs he found, and the ecclesiastical customs he left. There are the disputes as to how many Patricks there were, whether not rather seven than one, and how much is to be attributed to St. Patrick's forerunner, Palladius. But the very heat and confusion of the anti-

quarian battle seems to bring out in stronger relief the one personality about whom the whole of the conflicting historians, and contending races, and controversial theologians gather with exceptional unanimity.

In one thing Ireland was undeniably distinct from the rest of Europe, as St. Patrick knew it,—Rome, in the days of her earlier empire, or in the corruption of the later, had never held sway over it. There were no traces of the vast network of the Roman roads, linking the remotest frontiers to the Imperial City; no trace of that wonderful organization with which Patrick as the son of a Decurion must have been familiar. What he found in Ireland belonged to Ireland herself. The forms of social organization he found seem to have been the influential Druid priesthood; and the family organization of chieftains and septs common to the Celtic nations. His mode of dealing with these forms of social life seems to have been not to destroy, but as far as possible to Christianize and to use.

The Druids were the priests and poets, and lawyers and historians, and men of letters of the race. These St. Patrick always sought to win to Christianity, and in a great measure succeeded.

The schools of the Bards grew into the schools of the monasteries; the songs and music of the Bards soared upward in Christian hymns; their Irish harp has become and has remained the symbol of Catholic Christian Ireland. In the biographies and legends, St. Patrick's mission always begins with the Bards and the Chieftains, the Kings and the Druids.

A sense of the solidity of his life grows out of the various allegories and dramatic episodes of the legends as we trace his voyages and travels through familiar places, many of them still stamped with his name, or linked with some unbroken local tradition of his presence.

We may leave the miracles of vengeance to the writers of the legends; but the miracle of faith and charity remains. We may pass by the cursing of rivers that yielded him no fish; but the rivers remain, if not the fish, with names still to be recognized. The pagans of Wicklow are said to have received him with showers of stones, and the river Vartry, where he is said to have first stepped on shore, still supplies Dublin with water. But the first point we need pause at is the river Slaney, which flows into the south-western creek of Strangford Lough in County Down.

It is characteristic that the first place he sought out, was the place of his captivity in the land of the Dalriads, the country of Milchu, his former master. On his way to Antrim he landed, and left his boat at the mouth of the river Slaney. It is a curious coincidence that the first man he met on landing, where he himself had herded King Milchu's swine, was a swineherd, who fled at the approach of the strangers, taking them for pirates, and called his master Dichu the chieftain of the district to help him. The chieftain received the strangers hospitably, and became Patrick's first convert. With him however Patrick only stayed a few days, hastening on to the oak woods where he had herded the swine, and the sides of the basaltic hill of Slemish, where he had camped out in the snow and rain, and where his spirit had learned to tread the heavenly paths. (There, says one of the biographers, in the familiar oak woods he suddenly beheld the house of his master King Milchu in flames. Milchu, in terror and despair at the approaching revenge of his former slave, having set his house on fire intentionally, rushed into the flames, whereupon, says the legend, St. Patrick prophesied that his sons should be slaves for

ever: an example of the curious way in which some of the biographers seem entirely to misunderstand the whole purpose and meaning of the Saint's life.) From Antrim, Patrick returned to his friend, the chieftain Dichu, who granted him a barn with land around, which became Patrick's first Church in Ireland, called Sabhol or Saul, two miles from Down Patrick. But Patrick did not live in Antrim; he resolved to strike at the heart of the enemy's position, Tara, the chief seat of King Laoghaire, "Tara's halls," where the harps of the poets used to hang, and the Irish Parliament, or Legislative Assembly, met.

"The Feis of Tara every third year
To preserve laws and Rules
Was then regularly convened
By the illustrious Kings of Erin."

The track of Patrick to Tara can be traced by the mouth of the Boyne, where he laid up his boats, the river not being navigable, to the lofty hill of Slane, twelve miles from the lower royal hill of Tara, with its forts and large wooden halls, which could be seen across the broad plain of Meath.

There, on the high hill of Slane, Patrick dared

to light the sacred fire on Easter Eve in challenge to the heathen priests.

To the period of this conflict with the Druids at Tara is assigned the famous *Hymnus Scoticus*, long, it is said, sung by the peasants at bed-time as a breastplate (Lorica) against evil. A finer invocation of the Divine Presence everywhere and at all times is scarcely to be found. The forms of evil and hostility which it deprecates are also such as belong especially to the time. And unlike the Druid in the Legend, it seeks to overcome evil not with evil, but with good.

(1) I bind to myself to-day,
The strong power of the invocation of the
Trinity,
The faith of the Trinity in Unity,
The Creator of the elements.

(2) I bind to myself to-day,
The power of the incarnation of Christ
with that of His Baptism,
The power of the Crucifixion, with that of
His Burial,

¹ Then ensues, in the Legend, a battle of marvels with the Magicians, and earthquakes, and whirlwinds, and fire, ending in the rout of the heathen.

The power of the Resurrection with the
Ascension,
The power of the coming to the Sentence
of Judgment.

(3) I bind to myself to-day,
The power of the love of Seraphim,
In the obedience of Angels,
In hope of Resurrection unto reward,
In the prayers of the noble Fathers,
In the predictions of the Prophets,
In the preaching of Apostles,
In the faith of Confessors,
In the purity of Holy Virgins,
In the acts of Righteous Men.

(4) I bind to myself to-day,
The power of Heaven,
The light of the Sun,
The whiteness of Snow,
The force of Fire,
The flashing of Lightning,
The velocity of Wind,
The depth of the Sea,
The stability of the Earth,
The hardness of Rocks.

- (5) I bind to myself to-day,
The Power of God to guide me,
The Might of God to uphold me,
The Wisdom of God to teach me,
The Eye of God to watch over me,
The Ear of God to hear me,
The Word of God to give me speech,
The Hand of God to protect me,
The Way of God to prevent me,
The Shield of God to shelter me,
The Host of God to defend me,
 Against the snares of demons,
 Against the temptations of vices,
 Against the lusts of nature,
 Against every man who meditates
 injury to me,
 Whether far or near,
 With few or with many.
- (6) I have set around me all these powers,
 Against every hostile savage power
 Directed against my body and my soul,
 Against the incarnations of false prophets,
 Against the black laws of heathenism,
 Against the false laws of heresy,
 Against the deceits of idolatry,

Against the spells of women, and smiths,
and druids,
Against all knowledge which binds the
soul of man.

- (7) Christ protect me to-day,
Against poison, against burning,
Against drowning, against wound,
That I may receive abundant reward.
- (8) Christ with me, Christ before me,
Christ behind me, Christ within me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ at my right, Christ at my left.
Christ in the fort,
Christ in the chariot-seat,
Christ in the poop.
- (9) Christ in the heart of every man who
thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of every man who
speaks to me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.
- (10) I bind to myself to-day,
The strong power of an invocation of the
Trinity,

The faith of the Trinity in Unity,
The Creator of the elements.

(11) Domini est salus,
Domini est salus,
Christi est salus,
Salus tua Domine sit semper nobiscum.

The conflict between the Druids of Tara and St. Patrick is said to terminate in the victory of St. Patrick, the defeat of Paganism, and the baptism of a large number of Irish, among them of King Laoghaire, whose conversion however seems to have been very external, since he chose to be buried on the outer rampart of Tara, "with his face turned southwards towards the men of Leinster, as fighting with them, for he was the enemy of the Leinster men all his life." After his death, his son said to Patrick, "My father did not permit me to believe, but commanded that he should be buried on the ramparts of Tara, as men stand up in battle, for the Gentiles are wont to be buried in their sepulchres armed, with weapons ready, face to face."

On the other hand, at Telltown, ten miles north of Tara, Laoghaire's younger brother, Conall Mac Neil, received Patrick with great joy in his own

house, and was baptized, and gave him the site of a church sixty feet long, "for the God of Patrick." And there is to this day a church at Telltown, rebuilt in the days of the Georges, but still sixty feet long. At Telltown are still to be seen the remains of the great rath of the chieftains; and at Tara, the earthwork where the kings entertained the great gathering of the clans and people; and also the wells where Patrick baptized his new Christians may still be traced.

Some of the chieftains, especially Erc of the royal lineage, called a Magus or Druid, who only rose to pay honour to Patrick in the assembly at Tara, were genuine converts.

In the story of Erc's baptism, it is told how St. Patrick said to him, "Why didst thou alone rise up in honour of my God?" And Erc said, "Why, I know not—I see sparks of fire going from thy lips to mine." Then the Saint said to him, "Wilt thou receive the baptism of the Lord which I have with me?" He answered, "I will receive it."

And being come to the fountain of Loigles (a well or fort of Tara), where he baptized many thousand in that day, he heard one saying to another, "I am Endeus, son of Amolgaid, from

the western regions, from the Wood of Fochlut." Patrick rejoiced greatly when he heard the name of the Wood of Fochlut; for this was "the Wood by the Western Sea," to which "the voice of the Irish," the cry of the children, had called him in his dream long ago. And to Connaught, by the Western Sea, he went.

Seven sons of Amalgaidh are said by Tirechan (writing early in the seventh century) to have come to the Court of King Laoghaire to settle a dispute about their inheritance. It was settled that the inheritance should be divided among the seven brothers, with the recognition of Endeus the eldest as chief. St. Patrick set out to the West with them, paying largely for the escort.

In his *Confession* he indignantly repels the charge of taking money from his converts, and says, "Nay! I expended money for you as far as I was able, and I went among you and everywhere for your sakes through many dangers, even to those extreme regions beyond which no man was (the shores of Connaught), and whither no man had ever gone to baptize, or to ordain, or to confirm the people there by the gift of the Lord. I did all things diligently and most gladly for your salvation. At the same time I gave

presents to the kings, besides the cost of keeping their sons, who walked with me that they should not seize me with my companions. And on that day (*in illâ die*) they most eagerly desired to kill me, but my time was not yet come; yet they plundered all they could find with us, and bound me in irons. But on the fourteenth day the Lord delivered me from their power, and whatever was ours was restored to us, through God, by the help of the close friends, whom we had before provided. But you know how much I expended on those who were judges, throughout all the districts where I used most frequently to visit. And I think I paid them the hire of not less than fifteen men, that so you might enjoy me, and that I might enjoy you in the Lord. I do not repent of it, yea, it is not enough for me; I still spend and will spend more. The Lord is mighty to give me more hereafter, that I may expend myself for your sakes."

The spending, not the receiving, always the first and last thought; the reward of giving, to have more to give! This is a passage full of suggestion. It makes it evident that the conquest of Ireland for Christ by Patrick was no easily won field; the perils of that journey to

the far West, from Druids and others, were great. But this is the only instance of which he speaks of them in his *Confession*. Again, his way through Connaught can be traced by the mountain of Cruagh Patrick, commanding Clew Bay in the south of Mayo, where legend says he banished from Ireland the serpents and toads and demons who gathered round him like a flight of crows darkening the skies. Thence he journeyed northward to find the wood of his dream, the Wood of Fochlut, between Killala and Ballymena on the bay which borders Mayo and Sligo.

The legend which dramatizes his meeting with the two daughters of King Laoghaire is connected with Connaught.

St. Patrick comes to the well, and he and his disciples sit down.

¹ Then St. Patrick came to the well (*ad fontem*) which is called *Clebach*, on the sides of *Crochan* towards the east; and before sunrise they (*i. e.* Patrick and his followers) sat down near the

¹ This story is told by Tirechan, in the *Book of Armagh*, quoted by Dr. Todd's *Life of St. Patrick*, and also by the Rev. G. T. Stokes' *Ireland and the Celtic Church*. It bears the marks, they say, of the highest antiquity.

well. And lo! the two daughters of King Laoghaire, Ethne the fair (*alba*), and Fedelm the ruddy (*rufa*), came early to the well, to wash, after the manner of women, and they found near the well a synod of holy Bishops with Patrick. And they knew not whence they were, or in what form, or from what people, or from what country; but they supposed them to be Duine Sidhe, or gods of the earth, or a phantasm. And the virgins said unto them, "Who are ye? and whence come ye?" And Patrick said unto them, "It were better for you to confess to our true God, than to inquire concerning our race."

The first virgin said—

"Who is God?"

"And where is God?"

"And of what (nature) is God?"

"And where is His dwelling-place?"

"Has your God sons and daughters, gold and silver?"

"Is He ever-living?"

"Is He beautiful?"

"Did many foster His Son?"

"Are His daughters dear and beauteous to men of the world?"

"Is He in heaven or in earth?"

“ In the sea ?

“ In rivers ?

“ In mountainous places ?

“ In valleys ?

“ Declare unto us the knowledge of Him.

“ How shall He be seen ?

“ How is He to be loved ?

“ How is He to be found ?

“ Is it in youth ?

“ Is it in old age, that He is to be found ? ”

But St. Patrick, full of the Holy Ghost, answered and said—

“ Our God is the God of all men.

“ The God of heaven and earth, of the sea and rivers.

“ The God of the sun, the moon, and the stars.

“ The God of the high mountains, and of the lowly valleys.

“ The God who is above heaven, and in heaven, and under heaven.

“ He hath a habitation in the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that are therein.

“ He inspireth all things.

“ He quickeneth all things.

“ He is over all things.

“ He sustaineth all things.

“He giveth light to the light of the sun.

“And He hath made springs in a dry ground,

“And dry islands in the sea,

“And hath appointed the stars to serve the greater lights.

“He hath a Son co-eternal and co-equal (*con-similem*) with Himself.

“The Son is not younger than the Father,

“Nor is the Father older than the Son,

“And the Holy Ghost breatheth in them (*inflat in eis*).

“The Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are not divided (*non separantur*).

“But I desire to unite you to the Heavenly King—inasmuch as you are the daughters of an earthly King—to believe.”

And the virgins said, as with one mouth and one heart—

“Teach us most diligently how we may believe in the Heavenly King. Show us how we may see Him face to face; and whatsoever thou shalt say unto us we will do.”

And Patrick said—

“Believe ye that by baptism ye put off the sin of your father and your mother?”—They answered, “We believe.”

“Believe ye in repentance after sin?”—“We believe.”

“Believe ye in life after death? Believe ye the resurrection at the Day of Judgment?”—“We believe.”

“Believe ye the Unity of the Church?”—“We believe.”

And they were baptized; and a white garment put upon their heads. And they asked to see the face of Christ. The Saint said unto them, “Ye cannot see the face of Christ except ye taste of death, and except ye receive the Sacrifice.”

And they answered, “Give us the Sacrifice, that we may behold the Son our Spouse.”

And they received the Eucharist of God, and they slept in death (*dormierunt in morte*), and they were laid out on one bed, covered with garments: and (their friends) made great lamentations and weeping for them.

Much discussion appears to have arisen about this poem, as it might arise about many poems—from those in the sacred Scriptures to Browning—seeing that the poets seem often to see more than they can sing, and also to sing more than they can explain.

Among the points most seriously discussed, appears to be whether the princesses committed suicide, thus involving St. Patrick's approval of human sacrifices.

But as a dramatic idyll how lovely it is!—the young princesses, like Nausicaa of old, coming to wash at the well, rosy and fair in the light of early dawn, wondering at the vision of the company of strangers, grave and still, gathered around the well, wondering whether they are fairies or phantoms. Then the fearless questioning, and the answer opening their hearts to pour out all the questions for ever in human hearts concerning immortal life and God, and His relation to man and how to find Him; where He is, and where He dwells; if He, unlike us, is deathless; if He, like the best we can dream of, is beautiful; if He has daughters; if He is in the seas and the rivers, in the mountains and the valleys—not limited to one place; if He is one that might be seen and loved and found; and if to be found indeed, how, and how soon? must we wait for that vision until we are old, or may the young find and love Him? And then the simple answer of Patrick: that God dwelleth not in heaven only, but in the earth, in the sea, in-

spiring all, giving life and light to all things; Himself the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; Himself love, desiring the love of mankind, the love of the two young maidens, if they will believe.

And the maiden sisters, eagerly drinking in the whole wonderful story, with one heart and mouth reply, "Teach us diligently how we may believe in the Heavenly King; show Him to us that we may see Him face to face." Then they hear of sin and of washing it away; of immortal life, resurrection, and judgment, and of a believing multitude, one Catholic undivided Church. And, believing and rejoicing, they are baptized, and the white veil is placed on their heads, and they receive the Eucharist of God; and they sleep side by side in death, which is but the lying down to wake up again, and see the King, the Spouse, face to face.

All the mission of St. Patrick seems enshrined in this poem; the purity and beauty of Irish womanhood; the simplicity and fearless frankness of the maidens; the quick perception of spiritual truth; the keen longing for spiritual life; the opening out of the fervent heart in responsive love to the love of God; the readiness

to die, to be with the Beloved in the life beyond.

The share of women in the Christianizing of Ireland is also remarkable and characteristic. Side by side with the name of Patrick in the tradition, rooted in the hearts of the Irish people, is the name of Bridget, Bride, Brigid, virgin Saint and Abbess; she also a captive, daughter of a captive, and a slave; her life also a life of victory over wrongs, of overcoming evil with good.

After patiently enduring hardships, and learning the lesson of bondage like St. Patrick—learning to cook, and bake, and spin, and weave, and tend the sheep, under a hard mistress—she is set free to serve her Lord, and her country, men and women, as a spiritual queen and abbess. She gathers round her the suffering, takes the captives to her heart, and saves them from cruel bondage.¹ Like St. Patrick, from her own

¹ There is a story of her converting to Christianity the wizard to whom she was in bondage, and his wife. The wizard having become a Christian, sets her free. "Thou shalt not be in bondage to me," he says; "serve thou the Lord." He also gives her as her own the kine she used to milk. "Take thou the kine," she says, "and give me my mother's freedom." He gives her both, and she gives all to the poor and needy.

wrongs she has learned, not resentment, but boundless compassion and sympathy. The place of honour assigned to her is almost the highest of all. At her abbey of Kildare, innumerable people—men and women—flock to her for sympathy, and teaching, and healing. Her jurisdiction extends from sea to sea. From this centre of Kildare, she travels continually about the land, gathering communities of Christians together. She seeks out a holy hermit to become the bishop of her many flocks, and thenceforth together—“he the anointed head of all bishops, and she the most blessed chief of all virgins”—they rule over the Christians of Ireland.

Many wild legends have gathered about her. But the sacred picture remains queenly and gracious,—not to be effaced by all the painting over or painting out,—of the captive maiden taking the captives to her heart; by her faith, and patience, and wisdom, lifting up womanhood throughout her country; reigning and serving; singing to her harp the praises of God in the royal hall at Tara; gathering the wretched and wronged and suffering around her, not to heal and succour only, but to make of them also

healers, succourers, and centres of light to all around. The fervour of the warm wide Irish heart glows through the hymn attributed to her.

“I would a lake of hydromel for the King of kings.

“I would that all the people of heaven should drink of it for ever.

“I would the viands of faith and piety, and also instruments of penitence in my House.

“I would have my House full of men of heaven.

“I would great cups of charity to distribute.

“I would cellars full of graces for my companions.

“I would that joy should be given at the banquet.

“I would that Jesus, Jesus Himself, should reign over it.

“I would that the three Marys of illustrious memory, and that all the spirits should be gathered here from all parts.

“I would be the steward of the Lord, and at the cost of a thousand sufferings receive His blessing.

“I would a lake of hydromel for the King of kings.

“I would that all the people of heaven should drink of it for ever.”

In the story of St. Patrick we cannot leave out the legend of the holy woman whose name lives beside his.

The last things told of her in reference to Patrick, whom she survived some years, are two prophecies. One was of the period of declension and darkness which was to succeed their own era of light and victory, “four ploughs of destruction” which were to mar the work of his “four sacred ploughs of the four Gospels,” with which he had made the land fruitful. The other was of the approaching death of Patrick, whose shroud she prepared and embroidered.

III.

AFTER the seven years of St. Patrick’s missions in Connaught, there are legends of seven years in Munster. The legends abound in parallels of numbers. To these legends of Munster belongs the story of the King of Munster, whose foot, at his baptism, Patrick inadvertently pierced with the sharp end of his crosier. The King, imagin-

ing that this was a necessary part of the baptismal rite, endured the torture without allowing himself the slightest expression of pain.

At this point may be placed the story of the Chieftain Daire, which belongs to Ulster and Armagh.¹

“There was a certain rich and honourable man in the regions of the Orientals, whose name was *Daire*. Him St. Patrick desired to give unto him a place for the exercise of religion (*ad exercendam religionem*). And the rich man said unto the Saint, ‘What place askest thou?’ ‘I ask,’ said the Saint, ‘that thou give me that height of land which is called *Dorsum Salicis*, and there I will build a place.’ But he would not give that high land to the Saint; he gave him however another place in lower land, where now is *Fertæ martyrum*, near *Ardd-Machæ* (Armagh). And there St. Patrick dwelt with his followers (*cum suis*).

“Now after some time the Knight of Daire came, leading his horse *Miraculum* to feed in the grassy place of the Christians; and such letting loose of the horse into his place offended Patrick; and he said, ‘Daire has acted foolishly in send-

¹ Quoted from the *Book of Armagh*, by Dr. Todd.

ing brute animals to disturb the small holy place which he gave to God.' But the knight heeded not, like as a deaf man: and as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth, spake nothing: but leaving his horse there for that night he went his way.

"On the next day, however, in the morning, the knight, coming to see his horse, found him already dead; and returning home sad, he said to his master, 'Lo, that Christian hath slain thy horse, for the disturbing of his place hath offended him.'

"And Daire said, 'He also shall be slain; go now and kill him.' But as they were going forth, sooner than it can be told, death fell upon Daire (*dictu citius mors inruit super Daire*). Then his wife said, 'This is because of the Christian; let some one go quickly, and let his blessing be brought unto us, and thou shalt recover; and let them who went forth to kill him be stopped and recalled.'

"So two men went forth to the Christian, and concealing what had happened, said unto him, 'Lo, Daire is sick; let something be carried unto him from thee, if peradventure he may be healed.' But St. Patrick, knowing the things

that had happened, said, 'Yea.' And he blessed water, and gave it unto them, saying, 'Go, sprinkle your horse with this water, and take him with you.' And they did so, and the horse revived, and they took him with them. And Daire was healed, when sprinkled with the holy water.

"Then Daire came after these things to honour St. Patrick, bringing with him a wonderful brazen cauldron, from beyond seas (*eneum mirabilem transmarinum*), which held three firkins. And Daire said unto the saint, 'Lo, this cauldron is thine.' And St. Patrick said, '*Gratzacham*' (*gratias agam*). Then Daire returned to his own home and said, 'The man is a fool, for he said nothing good for a wonderful cauldron of three firkins, except *Gratzacham*.' Then Daire added and said to his servants, 'Go and bring us back our cauldron.' They went and said to Saint Patrick, 'We must take away our cauldron.' Nevertheless, this time also Saint Patrick said, '*Gratzacham*, take it.' So they took it. Then Daire asked his people saying, 'What said the Christian when ye took away the cauldron?' But they answered, 'He said *Gratzacham* again.' Daire answered and said, '*Gratza-*

cham when I give, *Gratzacham* when I take away. His saying is so good that with those *Gratzachams* his cauldron shall be brought back to him.' And Daire himself went this time and brought back the cauldron to Patrick, saying to him, 'Thy cauldron shall remain with thee, for thou art a steady and imperturbable man; moreover, also, that portion of land which thou didst desire before, I now give thee as fully as I have it, and dwell thou there.' And this is the city which is now named Ardd-Machæ. And Saint Patrick and Daire both went forth to view the wonderful and well-pleasing gift of the oblation; and they went up to that height of land, and they found there a roe with her little fawn, which was lying in the place where the altar of the northern church in Ardd-Machæ now is; and the companions of Patrick wished to catch the fawn and kill it. But the Saint would not, nor did he permit it. Nay, he himself took up the fawn, carrying it on his shoulders, and the roe, like a very pet lamb, followed him until he had laid down the fawn in another field, situated at the north side of Ardd-Machæ, where to this day, as the learned say, some signs of the miracles (*signa quædam virtutis*) still remain."

There is something of the nature of curses and spells in this story, but some points in it seem too beautiful and too characteristic to be omitted: the tenderness of the Saint for the roe and the fawn; the fact that what conquered the chieftain was his fine indifference to gifts and to wrongs. "Thou art a steady and imperturbable man," the Irish chief says, and gives him all he asked.

St. Patrick knew the personal loyalty to chief and friend so ineradicable in the race, and knew how to appeal to it. The devotion his own spiritual clansmen felt for him is touchingly shown in the story of his faithful servant Oran. St. Patrick had dared to overturn a sacred heathen pillar stone on one of the plains. The chieftain of the region resolved to avenge this deed by killing the Saint. This came to the ears of Oran. He did not tell his master, but soon afterwards, when he was driving him past this chieftain's fortress, he pretended to be fatigued, and persuaded St. Patrick to take the reins and his place in the chariot. The loving stratagem succeeded. The chieftain cast his javelin at Oran, supposing him to be the Saint. And the faithful servant had the desire of his heart in saving his master's life at the cost of his own.

St. Patrick's last days seem to have been spent chiefly in Ulster, in the scenes of his earliest missionary labours. He is said to have died in extreme old age.

The story says that he was setting out for Armagh to die among his disciples there, but that an angel met him and sent him back to Saul, the place of his captivity and his first victory, and that there where his first church had been built, on the site of the barn given him by his first convert, his spirit passed to the rest and service beyond. And so ends the life of St. Patrick, the great national Poem of Ireland.

IV.

THE period of St. Patrick's life to which his other unquestioned writing—the *Epistle to Coroticus*—belongs does not seem certain. It is interesting, because it is the voice of the shepherd crying against the wolves which had ravaged his flock.

It is addressed to Coroticus and his soldiers, apparently nominal Christians from Wales, who had slain and captured some of St. Patrick's Irish Christians. Also it ends, not with curses,

but with a yearning plea with these apostate Christians to repent and be saved. There is a wonderful pulsation of passionate and varying emotion in this old writing: indignation and pity, honour and quenchless hope for the wronged; yet through all the terrible denunciations on the wrong-doers, terrible as St. John's, an undying hope that even these may turn and be saved. For it is these indeed who are the captives, the dying and the dead, in bondage to their own avarice, dying to all that is worth living for, dead to their faith, to their true selves, and to God.

EXTRACTS FROM ST. PATRICK'S *EPISTLE TO
COROTICUS.*

“I, Patrick, a sinner and unlearned, declare that I was made bishop in Ireland. I most certainly hold that it was from God I received what I am, and therefore for the love of God I dwell a pilgrim and exile among a barbarous people. He is my witness that I speak the truth. It was not my wish to use language so harsh and so severe, but I am compelled by a zeal for God, and the truth of Christ, who stirred me up for the love of my neighbours and sons, for whom

I have given up country and parents, and am ready to give my life also if I am worthy. I have made a vow to my God to teach the people, although some may despise me. With my own hand I have written and composed these words to be delivered to the soldiers of Coroticus; I say not, to my fellow-citizens, nor to the fellow-citizens of the Roman saints, but to the fellow-citizens of demons, who, on account of their evil deeds, abide in death after the hostile rites of the barbarians; companions of the Scots and apostate Picts, desiring, as it were, to glut themselves with the blood of innocent Christians, multitudes of whom I have begotten to God and confirmed in Christ.

“A cruel slaughter and massacre was committed by them on some neophytes, while still in their white robes, the day after they had been anointed with the chrism, and while it was yet visible on their foreheads. And I sent a letter by a holy presbyter, whom I taught from his infancy, accompanied by other clergymen, to entreat that they would restore some of the booty or of the baptized captives whom they had taken but they turned them into ridicule. Therefore I know not for whom I should rather grieve,

whether for those who were slain, or those whom they took captive, or those whom Satan has so grievously ensnared, and who shall be delivered over like himself to the eternal pains of hell, for 'whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin,' and the child of the devil.

"Wherefore, let every one who fears God know that these strangers to me and to Christ my God, whose ambassador I am, are parricides and fratricides, ravening wolves, 'eating up the Lord's people as they eat bread,' as he says, 'Lord, the wicked have made void Thy law,' with which Ireland had been in these latter days most excellently and auspiciously planted and taught by God's favour.

* * * * *

"Wherefore I earnestly beseech those who are holy and humble of heart not to be flattered by them, nor to eat and drink with them, nor to receive alms from them, until they repent with bitter tears and make satisfaction to God, and set free those servants of God and baptized handmaids of Christ, for whom He was crucified and died. The Most High rejects the offerings of the unjust; he who offers a sacrifice from

the substance of the poor is like one who offers a son as a victim in the sight of his father.

* * * * *

“It were too long to enter into particulars, or to enumerate one by one the testimonies from the (Divine) law against such cupidity. Avarice is a deadly crime. ‘Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s goods.’ ‘Thou shalt not kill.’ No murderer can dwell with Christ. ‘Whosoever hateth his brother is reckoned a murderer.’ ‘He who loveth not his brother abideth in death.’ How much more is he guilty who has stained his hands with the blood of the sons of God, whom He has lately acquired in the very ends of the earth, through my humble exhortations!

“Did I come to Ireland without the Divine will, or merely from carnal motives? Who compelled me? I am bound in the Spirit not to see my kindred any more. Do I show a true compassion for that nation which formerly took me captive? I am free born according to the flesh, for my father was a Decurio. I have bartered my nobility for the good of others. I am not ashamed, nor do I repent of it. In short, I am delivered over in Christ to a foreign

people for the unspeakable glory of the eternal life, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, although my own friends do not acknowledge me. 'A prophet has no honour in his own country.'

"Are we not of one fold? have we not one father? As the Lord says, 'Whosoever is not with Me is against Me, and he who gathereth not with Me scattereth.' It is not fitting that 'one should destroy and another build.' Do I seek my own?"

Then he turns from Coroticus and his pirates with a passion of affection and pity to his captive sons.

"Therefore I will cry aloud with sorrow and grief; O most goodly and well-beloved brethren and sons whom I have begotten in Christ without number, what shall I do for you?"

This to those who survive in captivity. But he would not have them think of their murdered brothers and sisters as lost. These are the victors, not the vanquished, and to them he pours forth a song of welcome and victory.

"Thanks be to God, ye, O believers and baptized ones, have departed from the world to Paradise. I behold you. Ye have begun your journey to that region where there shall be 'no

night,' nor 'sorrow,' nor death any more, but ye shall rejoice as 'calves let loose, and ye shall tread down the wicked, and they shall be as ashes under your feet.'

"Ye therefore shall reign with the Apostles, and Prophets, and Martyrs, and shall receive an everlasting kingdom, as He Himself bears witness, saying, 'They shall come from the East and from the West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.'"

Then again returning to the apostate Christians, he pleads with the severest words of warning with them for their captives and themselves.

"Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and murderers, and liars, and perjurers, whose part shall be with the lake of fire eternal.' For not without reason does the Apostle say, 'If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly, and the sinner, and the transgressor of the law be found?' Where shall Coroticus be with his wicked rebels against Christ? Where shall they find themselves, who distribute among their depraved followers baptized women and captive orphans, for the sake of a wretched earthly kingdom, which passes away in a moment like

a cloud, or smoke scattered by the wind? Thus shall sinners and deceivers perish from the face of the Lord; but the righteous shall feast continually with Christ, and judge the nations, and rule over unjust kings for ever and ever.

“I bear witness before God and His holy angels, that it shall be as my ignorance has said. These are not my words, but those of God and the Apostles and Prophets, who have never lied, which I have put forth in Latin.

“‘He who believeth shall be saved, and he who believeth not shall be damned.’ God hath spoken. I earnestly entreat whatever servant of God is willing to be the bearer of this letter, that it may not be kept back from any one, but may rather be read before all the people, and in the presence of Coroticus himself.”

It is a trumpet-voice he is sending forth, a summons to surrender; and feeling his own impotence, he turns to Him who can save both the oppressed and the oppressor—

“But oh that God would inspire them, that at some time they may return unto Him, that thus, even though late, they may repent of their evil deeds. They have murdered the brethren of the Lord. But let them repent and release

the baptized women whom they have already taken captive, that so they may be worthy to live unto God, and may be made whole here and for eternity. Peace to" (or with?) "the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

It seems a curious ending, and has puzzled translators. But is it not simply Patrick's soul rising from the tumult below to the "Hallelujahs" above?

V.

WE have three very ancient authentic documents showing what was the faith St. Patrick brought to Ireland: the Creed in his *Confession*; what we may call his *Catechism* in the legend of his baptismal teaching to the two princesses by the well; and his *Hymnus Scoticus*, that great Practice of the Presence of God, so long used as a Lorica or Breastplate in the Spiritual Combat by Irish men and women.

In the *Catechism* we see how the first questions come from the catechumens. His answer unfolds to them with wonderful simplicity and sublimity the omnipresence of God in all the natural universe. Yet he begins not with

nature, but with man : man's personal relation to God, "*our* God"; the relation of God to all men, "the God of all men." Then follows the Revelation of God as Eternal Love, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

This is the eager question of the maidens—

"How is He to be loved? How is He to be found?"

And his answer is—

"I desire to lead you to the Heavenly King."

"Teach us how we may believe," they say, as he leads them from question to question. "Show us how we may see Him; and whatever thou shalt say unto us we will do."

This introduces the Christian Sacraments, and all the moral teaching about sin, repentance, and remission, immortal life, resurrection and judgment, and the unity of the Universal Church.

The Hymn gives us the secret of the Saint's own spiritual life—a life not lived in guarded seclusion from temptation, in prosaic blindness to the past, or in dreamy blindness to the local colour of the present, or in detachment from nature or human life, but in perpetual "Practice of the Presence of God" through all.

All this treasure of life and light St. Patrick

brought with him and carried with him into every corner of the land; his priceless and imperishable gift to the country which has been so loyally devoted to his memory.

Then as to external results in organization of Church and State, in building, and in literature. St. Patrick always seems to speak of himself as unlearned (*indoctus*); and making all allowance for religious expressions of self-depreciation, it may be probable that his work was to give seed to the sower rather than bread to the eater. If not himself the first to sow the seeds of learning everywhere, his mission was to consecrate what was already there, to turn earthly things to heavenly uses. On the three sacred stone pillars of the Druids in Connaught he wrote three names of Christ, in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin—Jesus, Soter, Salvator; and this was typical of his whole method. The Bards were to be won over to Christianity, not exterminated; the authority of the chieftains, the loyalty of the clansmen, was as far as possible to be incorporated into the Church. Bishops had clans rather than dioceses assigned to them; priests were to be chaplains to the chieftains and as kinsmen of the clansmen. The poetry was to flow into

the higher channels of Christian revelation; the music to become psalmody to gladden the services of the Church.

Tradition assigns to him the reform of the ancient Druidical laws. At Tara legend says King Laoghaire summoned a council of men consisting of three kings, three saints or bishops, three bards or historians. The code they then revised is still extant, the *Senchus Mor*, also called "the Law of St. Patrick," and "the Knowledge of Nine."

It is supposed that he introduced the Roman alphabet instead of the ancient Irish; it is to be remembered that the Gospels and Psalters preserved in the Irish monasteries are in Latin, also the Liturgy. Only the hymns were in Irish, St. Patrick's *Hymnus Scoticus*, and some of the hymns and poems of St. Columba. Latin in those days meant, of course, civilization and culture, the gate into all the inheritance of the civilized nations of the past and present.

It is to be noted that the version of the Gospel quoted in the *Confession* is earlier than the Vulgate of St. Jerome, although St. Jerome's translation had been in existence for some time. Indeed throughout the story of Patrick, as of

St. Columba in the next century, much of the interest lies in the detachment from the rest of the world, Christian or barbarian. There is nothing in St. Patrick's life to indicate that it was contemporary, as it was, with that of St. Chrysostom, St. Jerome, and St. Augustine. Yet St. Augustine must have been writing his *Confessions* about the same time as St. Patrick was writing his; St. Jerome was struggling with the difficulties of Hebrew and Greek in his Revised Version (objected to as an unnecessary novelty by not a few); St. John Chrysostom was Bishop of Constantinople in 397, and died in exile at Kukusus, in 404; Nestorius was condemned at Chalcedon in 430.

In St. Patrick's lifetime Rome was three times menaced by the barbarians, and twice taken. In 410 it was taken by Alaric and his Goths, a siege and fall which resounded through the world, and found its reverberations in St. Augustine's "City of God."

In A.D. 450, being virtually abandoned by the emperors Eastern and Western, the great Pope Leo I. defended his city and flock from Attila and his Huns, confronting Attila in his camp and inducing him to retire. In 454 Leo again

sought to defend his people from the Arian Vandals, and though unable to save them from plunder, succeeded in saving the inhabitants from destruction. Yet all these convulsions scarcely seem to make any vibration in the life of St. Patrick.

Ireland had indeed her own small fights of clans and chieftains, but it seemed as if for a time she was islanded away from the deluges which were sweeping over Europe, and the earthquakes which were convulsing it—an Ark of God to enshrine and preserve the faith for Scotland and England, and through them for the rest of the world.

It was especially, no doubt, by means of monastic institutions that this was accomplished. And these were among the solid things of St. Patrick's life.

The buildings of his monasteries were rough and small. "The way in which Patrick made the *Fertæ*" (sepulchral churches, usually built around relics) "was this: seven score feet in the *Les*" (or fort, a round building enclosing the dwellings of the monks), seven in the guest-house, seventeen feet in the kitchen, and seven feet in the oratory." There the monks and

students were gathered: a fortress from the continual contests of the clans; a retreat for study, a sanctuary for worship in the daily Sacred Offices of intercession and thanksgiving.

This was the germ of such great religious houses as Banchor in Antrim, or of St. Bridget's, Kildare, in which during the following century were gathered communities of three thousand at a time. And thus was preserved for Christendom the treasure of religion and civilization which St. Patrick brought to Ireland.

ST. COLUMBA.

ST. COLUMBA.

I.

WE come next in our "rough island story" to the story of a very small island, to another "fountain springing up on the soil of Britain" for the world; to Iona, the island of St. Columba. Every tiniest perennial spring, we know, has its origin from and its outlet into infinity, is an inheritor of the boundless resources of earth, and sea, and sky. Perhaps from some deep reservoir, some cool subterranean hidden lake in the dark recesses of the hills; perhaps from some sudden lodgment, after trickling through a sandy bed, on a soil it cannot penetrate, whence therefore it creeps again to the light. But certainly, through whatever recent channels, originating from above; drawn upward from the heaving spaces of the ocean, or from the dewdrops of some quiet garden on some angels'

ladder of sunbeams, and distilled downward from some floating cloud; certainly, in one line of descent or another, having for its parents the boundless sea and the quenchless sun.

Usually, we know, the fountains spring to light through the heart and life of some one freshly inspired and consecrated man, who has drunk deeply of the fountain of life, and ever abides beside it. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink, and from his heart shall flow rivers of living water."

But, in a secondary sense, the fountain owes its origin to many human and historical sources. St. Columba the Irishman leads us back to St. Patrick's Ireland. St. Patrick, we know, was not an Irishman, but St. Columba was typically Irish. The vivid colours of the national character glow with delightful distinctness through all the white halo thrown around him. The dullest attempt at his biography cannot reduce the variety and sparkle of the prism to monotonous, colourless daylight. No amount of painstaking endeavour to bleach the life into an edifying homily or a mere record of supernatural marvels can succeed in merging in the conventional saint the man, the very human man, the essentially Irish Irish-

man. Underneath all you cannot help catching the tones of—

“The powerfulest preacher,
And tenderest teacher,
And kindest creature
In old Donegal.”

For it was in Donegal that St. Columba was born, about A.D. 520 (518—523), not half a century after the death of St. Patrick, about the time of the death of St. Bridget.

He did not arrive in Iona, however, until about A.D. 565, and died there in 596 or 597, at the age of seventy-seven; so that his labours spread through the century.

He is said to have been about forty-two years old when he landed at Iona, so that the larger part of his life was spent in Ireland; and the learning of his life-lessons and his training for his work were chiefly there.

His birthplace was Gartan, a wild district of Donegal swept by the winds of the Atlantic. He was of the clan which gave its name to the district, and of the family of the Dalriad kings, to which had also belonged Milchu, St. Patrick's master. His great-great-great-grandfather was “Neall of the nine hostages.”

Since St. Patrick's time the Dalriads had made a settlement on the opposite coasts of Scotland, and we hear of St. Columba's cousins, Aidan and others, among the chieftains there. His mother's name was Eithne. She was of Leinster, of the family of a king or chieftain. Her name reminds us of Eithne the Fair, one of the king's daughters baptized by St. Patrick at the well.

Adamnan tells the story of a dream his mother had before his birth. An angel of the Lord appeared to her in a dream, bringing to her as he stood by her, a certain robe of extraordinary beauty, in which the most beautiful colours, as it were, of all the flowers seemed to be portrayed. After a short time he asked it back, and took it out of her hands, and having raised it and spread it out, he let it fly through the air. But she being sad at the loss of it, said to that man of venerable aspect, "Why dost thou take this lovely cloak away from me so soon?" He immediately replied, "Because this mantle is so exceedingly honourable that thou canst not retain it longer with thee." When this was said, the woman saw that the fore-mentioned robe was gradually receding from her in its

flight, and that then it expanded until its width exceeded the plains, and in its measurements was larger than the mountains and forests. Then she heard the following words: "Woman, do not grieve, for to the man to whom thou hast been joined by the marriage bond thou shalt bring forth a son, of so beautiful a character, that he shall be reckoned among his own people as one of the prophets of God, and hath been predestined by God to be the leader of innumerable souls to the heavenly country." At these words the woman awoke from her sleep.

He was baptized at Temple Douglas by the priest Cruithnechan, to whose care he was confided.¹

One day (it is said in Adamnan's life) this good priest on returning from church after Mass saw a bright light illuminating his house, and quietly entering the room where the little boy was sleeping, he beheld a radiance as of a ball of fire on the face of the child. He trembled and fell down on the ground, knowing

¹ With two baptismal names, Professor G. T. Stokes says, much opposed in meaning, and very significant of the contrasts and conflicts in his character—*Crimthann*, a wolf; and *Colum*, a dove,

this indicated the light within, the Holy Spirit illumining the soul of the boy.

Everywhere from his earliest childhood there seems to have been something in him that won the devoted love of all who had to do with him, and created an expectation of great things from him which doubtless helped to fulfil itself.

From this home of his fosterage he went to Moville, a monastery in Down on Loch Strangford, where he studied under St. Finnian. There he was ordained deacon. From Moville he went to Leinster to the monastery of Clonard.

Here, besides the teaching of the monks, he was under the instruction of Gemman, a Christian Bard. Between this old man and his pupil grew a warm friendship. To the end of his life he was loyal to the Bards, defending them effectually when threatened with expulsion. He was indeed called a Bard himself.

There is a legend that the two men were once reading on the open plain near each other, when a young girl, pursued by a "pitiless oppressor," fled to the old man for refuge. Gemman called for the aid of Columba, but the pursuer succeeded in stabbing the girl under the cloaks

they threw around her, and leaving her dead at their feet, turned and fled.

“How long,” said the old Bard, “will God, the just Judge, suffer this wrong to go unavenged?”

“At this very instant,” said Columba, “the soul of the maiden soars to heaven, and the soul of the murderer sinks to hell.”

And scarcely had he spoken when the “furious fleeing man,” blinded by rage and fear, fell over a stone and was killed.

Tender pity for the wronged and fierce indignation against the wrong-doer were always close in Columba’s heart.

At Clonard he was ordained priest by Bishop Etchen, and thence he passed on to the monastery of Glasnevin near Dublin, under the saintly and learned Abbot Mobhi.

Ireland during the fifty years since St. Patrick’s death had become studded with monasteries, and it seems as if the monks went from one to another to study under men distinguished in different ways, like the students in the German universities.

But in all these houses “plain living and high thinking” were combined. The monastic buildings were clusters of huts on the side of a hill or

by a river. Manual labour was required in all. Columba, descendant of chieftains, ground the corn with the rest, and in this also did his work with all his heart, so that his companions said the angels helped him. Everywhere love and honour encircled him; not always without the shadow of envy from meaner natures, one of whom received the rebuke from another, "What hast thou sacrificed but a carpenter's bench? But he has sacrificed a throne." Scarcely a noble rebuke! We know there are eyes to which the carpenter's bench, like the widow's mite, would be as much as the throne, if it were all that the possessor had.

A vivid picture of the life in these Irish monasteries rises before us,—the daily services with music and song, the eager drinking in of all learning, ancient Greek and Roman, and Christian, —Ovid and Virgil were read there;—the delight in transcribing manuscripts, and making them beautiful with illuminations. All that the "Press," and all the societies of arts and sciences, and all the guilds and unions of trades and crafts mean to us were concentrated in these monastic communities, besides the countless agencies for the organization of charity and relief of distress.

We know that Columba's own delight in transcribing and possessing and diffusing manuscripts was intense. Nothing made him so angry as the grudging the loan of a book to copy and use for others; nothing so aroused the "wolf" in his heart.

All the delight in grace of form and harmony of colour belonging to his race found its outlet in the illuminations of exquisite Irish gospels and psalters. The few of these which are left after the ravages of the Norsemen are the wonder of all who see them for delicacy and finish; the colour rich and tender as the markings of flowers, the interlacing lines and curves of such subtle grace and masterly firmness.

In Italy and Gaul, one barbaric race after another, Hun and Vandal and Lombard, were laying waste the civilization of ages. In Britain the Saxon (or English) heathen were effacing the remains of Roman culture and organization. But in this island oasis by the western sea, the young sons of the chieftains were eagerly travelling from monastery to monastery, gathering up all the inheritance of art and thought, Roman and Grecian, not omitting their own national poems; praising God in the old Latin prayers and

hymns, and enriching the hymnal with Christian poetry of their own.

In Rome, indeed, Pope Gregory the Great, amidst the floods of the destructive Lombard invasion, was consolidating the Christian ecclesiastical organization, which, with Roman law, was the only thing of the ancient world left standing.

But between Ireland and Rome the world was one seething flood of what must have seemed then, what did seem to St. Gregory, the final deluge of hopeless devastation and ruin. Ireland indeed was not free from her own perennial faction-fights. The monasteries had to be also forts. And in the warfare of the clans Columba not seldom took a keen interest and share.

When, in Columba's twenty-third year, the "Yellow Plague" scattered the community of Clonard, he went northward. The next nineteen years were years of ceaseless activity. He is said to have founded more than thirty monasteries, aided, no doubt, by his kinship with many of the chieftains and kings. His monastic life never severed him from the ties of clan and family. The Irish monastic communities seem indeed to have been incorporated with the clans, the dignity of Abbot frequently descending in the family of

the founder. The communities seem to have consisted of the nucleus of a religious house, with a large outer circle of tenants, workmen, and followers, like the household of a chieftain, more or less connected by ties of blood. Columba was no foreigner, like St. Patrick. He dwelt among his own people. He had always a passionate attachment to his country, his family and clan, the places familiar to him.

Keenly interested in the politics of his race, tenderly clinging to early associations, and bound up heart and soul with the monasteries where he had studied, revered as a saint, and followed as a chieftain by the communities he had founded, it must have seemed as if none of the sons of Erin were more irrevocably fixed to her soil than Columba.

And yet the great work of his life was to be elsewhere; the work which made his life one of the fountains of religion and civilization to the world. And this new path of power and blessing was entered by a very lowly door.

II.

LITTLE Iona lay still and lonely, with the Atlantic waves surging against her eastern shore, the mountains of Mull looking down on her from the east, the ocean no one had ever crossed between her and the shore no one had ever dreamt of.

In England the heathen Saxons were steadily advancing from east to west, from south to north, defeating and massacring the British Christians, driving them from home after home in the rich lowlands into the mountain fortresses of Wales. In 563, the year of Columba's landing in Iona, Uriconium, "the White City on the plain," one of the last Roman cities left, with its public buildings and pleasant villas, was captured and burnt. But in Ireland, all this time, in spite of the quarrels of the clans, civilization and the Christian faith were spreading; Columba especially was founding monasteries in all parts of the land, refuges of learning, and homes of prayer, gathering around him students and disciples, clerical and lay, inducing kinsmen and friends to consecrate themselves to God and to the service of man.

It is evident that he had every gift and faculty that might have made him a leader in his own land, the land he so dearly loved to the end of his life. High lineage, numerous and affectionate kindred, that indefinable personal charm which makes other men delight to follow and obey, and inspires them in following to be their highest and do their best.

Intense and fervent, ardent and impulsive as he was, with the quick perceptions and keen feelings of his race, he also worked with the patient steady industry of the most prosaic (we are told he had never an idle moment), lived by rule, himself obeying the Rule he made others obey. Everything we are told of him gives the impression of the most splendid physique. Tall, with a deep rich voice that seemed low and soft when near, yet penetrated beyond all other voices in clear enunciation,—every word telling,—and heard at a great distance. There seemed to be nothing he could not or would not do if needed, from the fine penmanship and colouring of those exquisite Irish manuscripts, to sailing coracles across the wild waves of the Atlantic, and through the perilous straits of the Western Isles. Adamnan tells how he was industriously baling

out the water from the boat, in a storm, like any other seaman, when the sailors themselves entreated him not to waste his time in doing what they could do, but to give himself to prayer. Then he lifted up his hands and prayed, and soon the vessel reached the port. And through all this intensity of mental, spiritual, and physical activity, there was evidently no overstrain, for the quality we hear of the oftenest is his wonderful joyousness and gladness of heart, beaming in his bright countenance, ringing in his clear, rich voice. There was a radiance about the brown ruddy face, in the clear grey eyes, on the fair locks that flowed on each side of the Celtic tonsure on his brow. One of the miracles most frequently told of him is the light that shone around and from him. Whatever else this may mean, it is evident that his face was as the face of an angel to those who loved him; irradiated by the intensity of the love with which he loved and was beloved. Yet beloved, honoured, revered, adored as he was, Irish of the Irish in every sense, Ireland was not to be the scene of his great work. Self-exiled, in the prime of his life, he was to abandon his country as his home for ever.

It is written of him in one of the legends, that when he founded the community and laid out the walls of Kells, he said, "Yet my resurrection shall not be here." A pathetic unconscious prophecy, but probably no foreseeing of his own destiny. The foreseeing of the Saints seldom comes to guide the circumstances of their own lives.

Happily for us, the story of St. Columba's mistakes, and what he considered his sins, has come down to us, not to be blotted out in all the loving halo his disciples saw around him. The shadows are not softened away, without which we should see the high qualities not in high relief, as we do, but in a dull faint outline. Happily, with St. Columba as with St. Peter, we know of the sinking under the waves as well as of the walking upon them, and therefore we also know of the Hand outstretched to uphold and save.

He was far too spontaneous to be flawless, and being great the flaws also were great. The self-contradictory eulogy, "he never had an enemy," certainly could not have been applied to him. He was too great for small natures not to envy; too generous for ungenerous natures not to mis-

understand, interpreting him by themselves; too just, and too indignant against injustice not to be hated by the wrong-doers and oppressors he opposed and baffled. Never to have had an enemy in this twisted and broken world must mean never to have fought a battle for the truth or the right.

The One only sinless and immaculate was, we know, surrounded by implacable hatred, as well as by devoted love—love unto death, hatred unto death; and St. Columba was not “without sin.” His faults were as vigorous as his virtues, and inextricably intertwined with them. The story of his heart-breaking exile from Ireland, his glorious vocation to Scotland, is told in the oldest and most authentic of the biographies, and has indelibly engraved itself on the heart of the nations who would have delighted to celebrate him as “without reproach.”

The quarrels which led to the battle of the two branches of the clan O'Neill were about the two things most likely to arouse Columba's indignation; what seemed to him an unjust refusal of a book he had copied, and a violation—as he considered—of the right of Sanctuary in killing a boy who had appealed to his protection.

His friend, St. Finnian of Moville, possessed a Psalter which Columba greatly desired to transcribe, and did transcribe secretly, contrary to the wish of the owner. When Finnian found this out, he said the copy belonged to him, as the "son-book" of his own book. They both selected Diarmid, chief or king of the southern branch of St. Columba's clan of the O'Neills, to arbitrate between them. Diarmid's decision became proverbial, "To every cow her own calf: and to every book its own son-book."

The grudging of books was at all times especially hateful to Columba. The *Black Book of Molaya*, which tells of the grudging of St. Finnian, also tells of a learned old man called Longared, who possessed many manuscripts which Columba much wished to be allowed to transcribe, but was churlishly refused. He retorted with the curse, "May thy books never more do good either to thee or to those who will come after thee!" And accordingly, says the legend, when the old man died, his books were found to be unintelligible. Whether this was a miracle, or simply the natural result of bad writing on the part of Longared, the legend clearly indicates St. Columba's view as to the use

of books, namely to "do good" to as many as possible; and why he disliked those who in a miserly way hoarded them.

While Columba's heart was embittered by what he considered this low view of books, and the unjust sentence of King Diarmid, a far deeper wrong, as he regarded it, from the same king, wounded him to the heart.

"Diarmid's son Fergus, King of Ireland, made the Feast of Tara, and a nobleman was killed at that feast by Curnan, son of Aodh; wherefore Diarmid killed him in revenge for that, because he committed murder at the feast of Tara, against law and the sanctuary of the feast; and before Curnan was put to death, he fled to the protection of Columcille, and notwithstanding the protection of Columcille, he was killed by Diarmid, and from that it arose that Columcille mustered the Clanna Neil of the north, because his own protection and the protection of the sons of Earc was violated, whereupon the battle of Cul Dreimhne was gained over Diarmid and the Connaught men, so that they were defeated through the prayers of Columcille."

Another version of the story is, that Columba, in a passion of indignation at the wrong and the

insult, exclaimed at the feast of Tara, "O bad king, I will denounce thee to my clan for the sword. Thou shalt see me no more till thou art humbled as thou hast humbled me." The King would have detained him, but he fled from Tara that night, travelling by the wild mountain paths to Tyrconnel, because the ordinary paths were guarded. He had no question of the wrong done to the boy Curnan and to himself, and to the Church, whose right of sanctuary he represented, and as he climbed the mountain ways in the darkness of that night he sang in his heart the

SONG OF TRUST.

"No man goes with me on the dark mountains,
Alone I pursue my rough road ;
Do thou, sacred Sun, smooth my pathway,
And fear shall flee far from my front.

When the day of my death-time hath dawned,
Six score stalwart men could not save me,
Nor fastness nor fortress can guard
From fate fixed by God and fore-ordered.

The wicked die even in church,
Or midst friends in an isle in a lake ;
But God's men are safe and unharmed
In the front and the fury of fighting.

My life?
 Will be lived while God wills ;
 None can lengthen, or shorten, or change it ;
 Each man's lot must be lived ere he dies ;
 Not the proudest of princes can change this.
 Often that which is risked most is saved,
 Often that which is guarded, destroyed.

Living God !
 Woe to him who works evil ;
 Misfortunes unthought of will scare him,
 Hopes that he nurseth will die,
 Eternal despair will ensnare him.

No magic can mirror man's fate,
 No bird on no bush can foretell it ;
 But our Maker is worthy our trust,
 On Him now I rely for my safety.

My Druid is Christ, Son of God,
 And of Mary, He is my great Abbot.
 The Father, the Son, and the Spirit,
 One God, are my stronghold and shelter.
 To these three I commit my good lands,
 To these One I commit my dear Order.”¹

The slaughter in the 'battle of Cul Dreimhne was great ; and the slain, as well as the victors, were Columba's kinsmen.

Two consequences followed ; the restoration of

¹ From the *Life of St. Columba*, by William Muir and the Rev. T. C. Rendell, who translated the Latin from Adamnan.

the Psalter, and the waking up of Columba's heart to what he had done in exciting his clan to battle. The night before the battle he had fasted and prayed, apparently with no misgivings, for on the morrow he went himself into the battle, solemnly taking the blood of the slain on himself.

The book, the precious Psalter, called the Cathach, which Columba had copied, was won back to him, and was presented by him to his clan. The old Irish *Life* says, "Now the Cathach is the name of the book on account of which the battle was fought, and it is the chief relic of Columcille, in the country of Cinell Conaill Galban; and it is covered with silver and gold, and it is not lawful to open it; and if it be sent thrice sunwise round the army of the Cinell Conaill when they are going to battle, they will return safe and with victory; and it is on the breast of a cleric who is to the best of his power free from mortal sin that the Cathach should be when brought round the army."

The book was won, but not to be read; only to become a mere magic spell. That was one external consequence of the battle. The other was that a synod was summoned by King Diarmid at Telltown, and St. Columba was excom-

municated during his absence; but with fearless courage he appeared afterwards before the assembly. "When St. Brendan, the founder of the monastery which in the Scotie language is called Birra (Birr in King's County), saw him approach in the distance, he quickly arose, and with head bowed reverently kissed him. When some of the seniors in that assembly, going apart from the rest, were finding fault with him, and saying, 'Why didst thou not decline to rise in the presence of an excommunicated person, and to kiss him?' he replied to them in this wise: 'If,' said he, 'you had seen what the Lord has this day thought fit to show to me regarding this His chosen one, whom you dishonour, you would never have excommunicated a person whom God not only doth not excommunicate, according to your unjust sentence, but even more and more highly esteemeth.' 'How, we would wish to know,' said they in reply, 'doth God exalt, as thou sayest, one whom we have excommunicated, not without reason?' 'I have seen,' said Brendan, 'a most brilliant pillar wreathed with fiery tresses preceding this same man of God whom you treat with contempt; I have also seen holy angels accompanying him on his journey

through the plain. Therefore I do not dare to slight him whom I see foreordained by God to be the leader of his people to life.' When he said this they desisted, and so far from daring to hold the Saint any longer excommunicated, they even treated him with the greatest respect and reverence." This took place in Teilte (Tailte, now Telltown in Meath).

The excommunication was withdrawn; the precious book was restored; the battle was won. And then it was that the conscience of the Saint seems to have awaked, not for dread of any peril to himself; it was the heart of the shepherd that awoke in anguish for the sheep of his flock slain through his fault. "He visited St. Lasrian, his confessor, after the battle, seeking of him wholesome counsel; that is, in what way, after the slaughter of so many slain, he might obtain the good-will of God and remission of sins. Therefore the blessed Lasrian, searcher of the Divine Scriptures, said that he should liberate as many souls from penalties as he had caused to be lost; and, in addition, he ordered him to dwell for ever in exile, out of Ireland."

"Another time, Columba with many disciples came to the holy father Abban, and being received

by him with great devotion, said to him—‘We come to thee that thou mayest pray for the souls of those who were slain in the battle of late fought by our persuasion, for the sake of the Church. For we know what on thy intercession follows from the mercy of God. We entreat, therefore, that thou wouldst inquire from the angel who converses with thee daily what is the will of God.’ And then the holy man went into the secret place where he was wont to pray to God, and to see and hear the angel of God. When he, with all earnestness, had given himself forth in prayer, St. Columba, wishing to see the holy father pray, and to hear what the angel would say to him, went after him, closely observing him. When, therefore, St. Abban thus prayed, lo! the angel of the Lord said to him, ‘O, Abban, what thou hast done is enough, for God has granted thee thy petition.’ Who replied, ‘I have only asked from the Lord rest for those souls for whom St. Columba is concerned.’ And the angel said: ‘They have rest.’”

In the account of O'Donnell, Columba declares himself ready to be a voluntary exile, accusing himself of the disastrous consequences of the battle. “According to what the angel said to

me," he said, "I must migrate from Ireland, and be an exile as long as I live, because on my account many of you have perished in battle."

However reverently others might think of him, his own soul was torn with anguish for the faithful clansmen hurried out of life in the battle through no fault of their own, longing that they might not be lost. And more than this. By the redeeming power of Christian faith, out of his agony and repentance was born the larger hope of arousing men to the nobler battle against heathenism and ignorance and sin, of carrying on the great work of Redemption, and making known the atoning, redeeming Christ to those who knew Him not. He went to bid farewell to his beloved monasteries of Durrow and Derry.

"My Derry, my little oak grove,
My dwelling and my little cell ;
Oh, eternal God, in Heaven above,
Send woe on him who spoils Derry.

Beloved is Raphoe the pure,
Beloved is fertile Drumhome,
Beloved are Swords and Kells ;
But sweeter and fairer to me
The salt sea where the sea-gulls cry
When I come to Derry from far ;
It is sweeter and dearer to me,
Sweeter to me."

But through all the clinging of affection, and all the pain of farewell, there is no hesitation. St. Columba's face is towards the sun-rising. By the redeeming, renewing power of the Christian faith, out of his agony and repentance were born the wider hope arousing men to the nobler battle against heathenism and ignorance and sin, of carrying on the Divine work of Redemption, and making known the atoning, redeeming Christ to those who knew Him not.

And so the great Story without End of overcoming evil with good, of conquering through suffering, of redemption through the Cross goes on.

St. Patrick's mission of liberation to Ireland was begun in the heart of a captive and a slave.

St. Columba's mission to Scotland, and through Scotland to England and the world, was rooted in the anguish of a heart grieving for sin, but turning its anguish into joy for others. Can any stories of the Holy War be more beautiful and typical than these two?

III.

AND so St. Columba's great mission to Scotland, and through Scotland to England and the world, began. The power of his gracious, beneficent presence was transferred to the land of his willing exile, of his affectionate adoption.

Twelve disciples accompanied him, the usual number for the foundation of a new community. One of these was Mochonna, who said to him, "It is thou who art my father. I vow to follow thee whithersoever thou goest." "My country," Columba replied, "is wherever I can win the largest harvest for Christ."

And so they launched their coracle, the wicker boat, sixty feet long, covered with ox-hide, and thwarted with oaken beams, perhaps from the oak-woods of his beloved Derry, or from Durrow.

The feelings with which he crossed the sea to his exile are rendered in one of the ancient Irish songs attributed to him.

"It was joy to ride on the white-horsed sea,
And to watch its waves break upon Ireland ;
It was joy to row in my boat on the sea,
And to land 'midst its foam upon Ireland ;

But my boat has its stern now to Derry,
And its bow to the land of the Ravens;
The noble sea now bears my boat
To Albyn, the land of the Ravens.

Mine eyes will see Ireland no more,
Great tears fall from grey eyes towards Ireland;
When the prow of my boat lifteth high,
I painfully gaze back on Ireland.

Oh! Ireland, where birds sing so sweetly,
Oh! Ireland, where clerks sing like birds,
Where men are so strong and so gentle,
And women so faithful and fair,
And elders so wise and so stately,
And princes so noble and great.

Many in Albyn are the warriors,
Many the diseases and the crimes,
Many are the half-naked people,
Many are the hard and jealous hearts.
Ireland! land of the oak, plum, and apple,
My blessing seven-fold be on thee.
My yearning heart breaketh at exile;
If I die now 'tis for love of Ireland."

They landed first at Oronsay. But there it is said he climbed a hill, and finding he could still see the shores of Ireland thence, decided that he could not bear to live in exile in sight of his native land. So they launched the boat and landed at Iona, in the little natural haven still called Port a Churraich (the Port of the Coracle).

Through the one opening between the break-water of rock and the cliff, he and his twelve

must have entered the harbour; and on the long straight beach of rounded pebbles, white, and grey, and porphyry-coloured, and translucent green, the boat must have been drawn up. Local tradition still points out the raised mound of the size and shape of such a coracle under which it is said to be buried.

When they turned from the sea and looked inland, the fine circle of steep cliffs must have confronted them like a grand amphitheatre, prepared and ready for some great General Assembly and Church of the faithful.

St. Columba at once, we are told, climbed the highest peak of rock, and finding, with a sad repose of heart, that thence he could see Ireland no longer, but only the boundless expanse of ocean, of which no man had seen or for ages would see the shore, he chose the island as his resting-place and starting-point. Cul-ri-Erin, the hill with the back towards Ireland, it is called to this day. Thenceforth he turned his face from the land he so dearly loved to the people he was to bless and save, "looking not at the things behind, but at the things before, pressing towards the mark for the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus."

Once more we have his own utterance of what he felt, in a poem bearing the title *Columcille fecit*.

The contrast between the joyful looking forward of this poem, and the sorrowful lament of the farewell, touches the full range of feeling of the heart of the poet and the saint.¹

“Delightful would it be to me to be in *Uchd Ailiun*,
On the pinnacle of a rock,
That I might often see
The face of the ocean ;
That I might see its heaving waves
Over the wide ocean,
When they chant music to their Father
Upon the world’s course ;
That I might see its level sparkling strand,
It would be no cause of sorrow ;
That I might hear the song of the wonderful birds,
Source of happiness ;
That I might hear the thunder of the crowding waves
Upon the rocks ;
That I might hear the roar by the side of the church
Of the surrounding sea ;
That I might see its noble flocks
Over the watery ocean ;
That I might see the sea monsters,
The greatest of all wonders ;

¹ The original is in one of the Irish MSS. in the Burgundian Library at Brussels. Quoted and translated by the Rev. Edward Alexander Cook from *Celtic Scotland*.

That I might see its ebb and flood
 In their career ;
 That my mystical name might be, I say,
 Cul ri Erin (Back turned to Ireland) ;
 That contrition might come upon my heart
 Upon looking at her ;
 That I might bewail my evils all,
 Though it were difficult to compute them ;
 That I might bless the Lord,
 Who conserves all,
 Heaven with its countless bright orders—
 Land, strand, and flood ;
 That I might search the books, all
 That would be good for my soul ;
 At times kneeling to beloved heaven ;
 At times at psalm-singing ;
 At times contemplating the King of heaven,
 Holy the Chief ;
 At times at work without compulsion ;
 This would be delightful.
 At times plucking *duilse* from the rocks,
 At times at fishing ;
 At times giving food to the poor ;
 At times in a *carcair* (solitary cell).
 The best advice in the presence of God
 To me has been vouchsafed.
 The King, whose servant I am, will not let
 Anything deceive me.”

They landed at Iona on the Eve of Whitsunday, May 12, A.D. 563.

Think of that first night alone on the bare, strange island, with no history then except the

ancient history of the seas and rocks; the fiery forces that had upheaved the mountains of Mull that looked down on it, and the basaltic caves of Staffa,—the water-powers that had moulded them. Ben More and the mountains of the mainland between them and the land they were to win; the surging ocean between them and the land they had loved and left.

Think how through the darkness of that night (as certainly in the services of the coming Pentecost), with the coracle drawn up on the beach, in that solemn amphitheatre of rock, with the roof of starry skies for their temple, the *Gloria in Excelsis* may have rung through the silence in the voices of the twelve, led by the magnificent tones of Columba. It was used in the night offices of the early Celtic Church.

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.

“We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we magnify Thee.

“We give thanks to Thee for Thy great mercy, Lord, Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.

“Lord, the Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit of God, and we all say Amen.

“Lord, Son of God the Father, Lamb of God,

who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

“Thou who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us, Lord, and receive our prayer.

“For Thou only art holy, Thou only art the Lord, Thou only art glorious, with the Holy Ghost, in the glory of God the Father.”¹

On the next day, the great Festival of Whitsunday, the “Mysteries of the Eucharist” must have been celebrated, the Holy Communion received for the first time in Iona, “Himself the Victim and Himself the Priest, saving the world by His Cross and blood.”²

¹ Irish version—in Latin—of the *Gloria in Excelsis*, adapted from the Greek.—Warren’s *Liturgy of the Celtic Church*.

² Hymn at the Communicating of Priests in the Antiphony of Banchor—

Dator salutis, christus
 filius dei, mundum
 saluavit per cru-
 -cem et sanguinem
 Pro universis immo-
 -latus dominus ipse sa-
 -cerdos existit
 et hostia

From Warren’s *Liturgy and Ritual of the Celtic Church*; the original arrangements of the quatrains retained.

And in the ancient Celtic Liturgy, before the Gospel, the twelve with Columba would chant the *Benedicite omnia opera*, calling on all the works of the Lord to praise Him: the wild winds of those western shores, which were yet the "winds of God"; the seas and floods which surged around them; the mountains and hills; the "whales," which still moved through those waters; the "wells" bubbling up on the hill-sides; the "beasts and cattle" which were to pasture there; the "fowls of the air," herons and sea-gulls; the "green things of the earth," heather and grasses which were around them in the freshness of the May. The human Priesthood had come at last to bless and sacrifice the sweet incense of Nature. Nevermore should the Song be without Words.

Think what it must have been also for the twelve to peal out the Catholic Creed, the Agnus Dei, the Holy, Holy, Holy, for the first time on those shores; for that little company knew well this was a beginning, though they could not indeed have dreamed of all that then began.

IV.

THE Standard of the Cross—*Vexilla Regis*—was indeed planted that Whitsunday in Iona. The Fountain of Life was indeed unsealed. On the morrow the long campaign had to begin, the waters were to be poured forth far and wide.

The twelve would have need of every resource they possessed, of every art and craft they could practise. They had to be seamen, fishermen, builders, carpenters, blacksmiths, tillers of the ground, shepherds. And first of all they had to quarry the stones, to gather the flocks, to plough the ground, to find the seed of the oats and rye and barley, to collect the wood never plentiful on Iona. And meantime they had to live. Their Rule,¹ “the Rule of Columcille,” in its hardest requirements as to food and clothing, was at that moment a necessity. In other respects, the means of observing it were not yet at hand. There were neither “the fast place with a door,” for solitude, nor leisure for “reading” (one of the three prescribed duties,

¹ First printed by Bishop Reeves from a MS. in the Burgundian Library. See *Life of St. Columba*, by Rev. E. A. Cook.

“prayer, work, reading”), nor “poor neighbours” to clothe and feed and instruct, or “sew garments for,” nor garments to sew. All this had yet to be created.

But the founding of monasteries, and the creating out of nothing, were no new works to St. Columba. The first thing of all, was the living seed of all the rest, the monastic community, the twelve devoted men; and these were there, with their abbot, their father to guide and inspire them, “offering themselves a living sacrifice to God for man” according to their Rule, “with minds prepared for red martyrdom, fortified and steadfast for white martyrdom, with forgiveness from the heart for every one, with constant prayers for those that troubled them, with the love of God with all the heart and strength, the love of their neighbours as themselves, abiding in the narratives of the Holy Scriptures and in the testaments of God throughout all times.”

The Twelve of Iona must soon have expanded into a large community.

“Illustrious the soldiers who were in Hy,
Thrice fifty in monastic rule,
With the curachs across the sea,
And for rowing three score men.”

Within the enclosure there were the church, the cells for the monks, the wooden hut where the Abbot, St. Columba, slept (with his head on the pillow of stone, and transcribed the delicately-finished manuscripts), glorified by his prayers and the Presence ever with him, and after his death in itself a sacred monument and shrine. There also were the kitchen and refectory, or wooden chamber for the frugal meals, and the hospital. Besides these, probably outside the inner wall of rough stones, were the guest-chambers; cells for the countless guests, invited and uninvited, who sought Iona and Columba,—saints and penitents, kings and poverty-stricken wanderers, conscience-smitten Christians seeking counsel and restoration, Pagans awakened to long for the new teaching. Few days passed in which there was not a signal from across the Straits of Mull for a boat to ferry some stranger to Iona; or some coracle from the opposite shores of Ireland with friends and disciples of Columba's from his early Irish foundations. And all this influx of visitors called for good store of provisions; for however frugally the monks themselves lived, according to their Rule "not taking food till they were hungry," they welcomed their

guests with Irish and Highland hospitality, and entertained them, especially the poor, with their best, giving "every increase that came to them in lawful meals, or in wearing apparel in pity to the brethren that wanted it, or to the poor," for by the Rule, "Almsgiving is to be followed before all things." And since Iona is no tropical island in southern seas, where bread-fruit grows on the trees, and the clothing, for comfort, may be of the slightest, but a rocky northern shore, where every bit of necessary food has to be wrung out of the soil with much toil, or fished out of the sea with much peril, and where in icy winters and rainy summers clothing is imperatively needed; and since, moreover, there were no markets at Oban or Glasgow to fall back on, all this hospitality involved no little labour and foresight on the part of the hosts.

There were therefore barns, kilns, stables, cow-byres, the smithy, the carpenter's shop, granaries wherein to store the grain of rye, oats, or barley, and mills to grind it.

There were also boats of wicker-work and hide for fishing, for ferrying the guests, for their own long mission voyages, involving ship-building, sail-making, tanning hides, &c. We

read also of carts or "chariots" (especially of one in which the coachbuilder seems to have been a little careless, as, to St. Columba's peril, the wheels had no lynch-pins).

The clothing also, simple as it was, had to be spun and woven. We read of "sewing garments"; and as the help of the naturally sewing and spinning sex was discarded, the monks must have had to become as clever with their fingers as sailors, in making their upper garments with hoods of coarse wool of the natural colour, and the tunic underneath of finer wool, with the shoes of hide, removed when they sat down to meat.

The monastery of that little island must have been a busy and cheerful place in St. Columba's days, as every house where he lived and ruled was sure to be.

The monastic life at Iona was evidently in no danger of becoming sleepy or isolated. Indeed the dangers guarded against in one of the rules are rather those of a metropolis (which indeed Iona was, in a very real sense) than of a secluded retreat. "A person who would talk with thee in idle words, or of the world; or who murmurs at what he cannot remedy or prevent, but who

would distress thee more, who should be a tattler between friends and foes, thou shalt not admit him to thee, but at once give him thy benediction should he deserve it." A gentle and original way of disposing of a gossip or a bore, which had the person so blessed known of the rule, might have led to self-examination. The positive remedy for this unprofitable intercourse is given in another rule. "A few religious men to converse with thee of God and His Testament; to visit thee on days of solemnity; to strengthen thee in the testaments of God and the narratives of the Scriptures." It is remarkable how that Sacred Literature, those two Sacred Literatures, the Testaments of God, are, in reading or transcribing, the joy of their hearts and the food of their religious life. For at the heart of all were fervent Christian worship and service, the love of God and man, continual adoration and solemn Eucharist, prayer, sacred songs soaring up to God, in the beauty and order of the Church Services, even then already well-worn paths of devotion, for centuries consecrated by the use of holy souls.

The regularity of that ordered, industrious, peaceful life must have been no small part of

the mission of these communities, in the midst of the tumultuous unrest and disorder, the fightings and fears of that battling, unsettled, migratory race and people.

“Everything in its proper order. No man is crowned except he strive lawfully. The work to be divided into three parts, viz. thine own work, and the work of thy place, as regards its real wants; thy share of the brethren’s work; lastly, to help the neighbours, viz. by instruction, or writing, or sewing garments, or whatever labour they may be in want of, as the Lord says, Thou shalt not appear empty before Me.”

The labour, spiritual and physical, was moreover to be not only regular and constant, but strenuous; “the measure of prayer until tears come,” “the measure of work till tears come,” or “the sweat of the brow,” which seems more appropriate.

No labour was to be beneath them if needed, baling out the sea in a storm, sewing garments, grinding corn. At the same time the higher faculties and training are not to be wasted on the lower work. The ordained or learned monk is to have “a servant, a discreet, religious, not tale-telling man, who is to attend continually on

thee, with moderate labour, of course, but always ready." The work of the instructed was especially to transcribe in the beautiful, marvellously fine, firm and clear penmanship of those Irish monasteries, and to illuminate for beauty and delight the manuscripts of Gospel and Psalter and Liturgy, so needed in the Religious Houses (reckoned at 300), and to work artistically in brass and silver and gold and precious stones, for the sacred vessels and the coverings of the sacred books.

Think what vistas into the history of the past, and the possibilities of the future; into a world of order and peace and art and knowledge here, as well as into the heavenly world unseen of love and peace and beauty in the beatific presence of God, these communities brought with them.

For, moreover, and essentially, Iona was not only a gathering-place but a starting-point, a centre attracting inward, because a centre radiating outward; not only a great monastery, but a great mission-house and propaganda for Scotland and the world.

The definite aim of these missions was firstly the northern Picts of Argyle and the Isles, of Inverness and the regions around. St. Ninian

had already brought the Christian faith to Aberdeenshire and the east, although much of his work had been again overwhelmed in heathenism, and St. Columba's name is known as a founder and evangelist also there. In the lowlands and in the regions around the Clyde, where Glasgow now is, Christianity had long been known. St. Kentigern (St. Mungo) was labouring there, and there is a touching account of a meeting between him and St. Columba. They are said to have met at Mellmaonor, on a spot hallowed by the benediction of St. Ninian, and in sacred counsel and communion to have exchanged the pastoral staff with each other in token of their union in Christ; and their parting words are said to have been,—from one, “The way of the just is made straight and the path of the holy is prepared,” and the response of the other, “The saints shall go from strength to strength until every one of them appeareth with the God of gods in Zion.”

But the chief work of St. Columba was, as he had intended, definitely among the heathen Picts of the north; and of that nation he has always been regarded as the apostle. We are not told many details of his mission. King Drude, on his

hill-fort near Loch Ness, is the person whose conversion is most spoken of; the chieftain whose closed gates Columba opened by the sign of the cross and prayer, as afterwards his heart by the revelation of divine love; whose Druids, as they tried to drown the sound of the vesper prayer with their heathen din, he silenced by the fine resonance of his magnificent voice penetrating through all the discordant noise.

Everywhere during the thirty years which St. Columba, when he landed at Iona, hoped to spend in the conversion of the Picts, he did spend himself night and day for them, toiling up and down the mountain paths, braving the perils of those rocky channels and stormy seas, in ceaseless journeys by sea and land; among the islands of the Hebrides, through Argyle and the northern Highlands, besides his frequent returns to Ireland, to Munster, to his beloved communities there. Everywhere through both lands his name is known and beloved to this day—in lonely islets, in wild Highland glens, in cities and in villages—as the founder of churches, the apostle of the nation, the bringer of light and life to all.

V.

A FEW extracts from St. Adamnan's *Life of St. Columba* may close this sketch.

Adamnan was a man greatly honoured in his generation and by succeeding generations, himself of the kindred of Columba, and the ninth Abbot of the "Family of Iona."

It gives value to his biography to see with what honour Bede speaks of him. Two incidents related of him bring his own life and character distinctly before us.¹

It is said that he was carrying his aged mother on his back, probably on some long journey among the Highlands, when they came to the scene of a battle, where the mother saw the horrible sight of one woman dragging another by a hooked scythe fixed in her breast. "Never will I leave this spot," she said to her son, "till thou hast promised to save women from mingling in battle." And it is recorded that at a Synod at Tara, afterwards, Adamnan had a law passed that thenceforth no woman should serve in "hostings" or battles.

¹ He was also, Bede tells us, author of a Record of Travels in the Holy Land by Arculf, a French bishop who spent a winter at Iona.

Adamnan's biography of Columba, precious as it is, was written at an interval after his death—perhaps among the most difficult of any—in the succeeding century. He was born in 624, twenty-seven years after the death of St. Columba, and died in 703. Those who had lived familiarly with the Saint must for the most part have passed away, though a few still survived who had seen his face and heard his voice. There had been time for the halo of legend to confuse colour and feature in a haze of light. What we long to know is the usual and ordinary. One day of St. Columba's everyday life would be of priceless value to us. There are two reasons which make this especially difficult for Adamnan to give. Firstly, Columba's everyday life was the life he and the "Family of Iona" were habitually living, and he would not have thought of narrating this for the benefit of those who lived in the same place, and by the same Rule. Secondly, he was the successor of Columba, writing of the Saint and Founder of his own Abbey. It was his filial duty to veil every imperfection and heighten every glory. It would be irreverent to speak to the sons of Columba's house of the faults of the Father, the faults the Saint himself so simply and

humbly acknowledged, and so gloriously atoned for. And yet the faults of such a character as Columba's are so inextricably interwoven with his virtues that in disentangling the discoloured threads you inevitably mar the whole fabric. And, moreover, Adannan's Life is professedly an *Éloge*, a Homily on the Saint for the edification of the "Family" of Iona, and the faithful throughout the world.

He divides it into three books: the Prophecies of Columba; his Miracles; and the Angelic Manifestations vouchsafed him. It is not so much an attempt at a portrait of the man, as a monumental memorial of the wonders done for him and by him. There is no attempt at anything so prosaic as a chronological succession of events or description of appearance or character.

We have to search through what his contemporary, St. Gregory the Great, called "the visible miracles which are the signs of holiness," to find what he called "the spiritual miracles which are the essence of holiness itself." We have to discover the man through the marvels, to recover the natural face through the supernatural lights, the human character through the superhuman marvels, the character which so

marvellously won and kept the devotion of those who lived with him day by day, and of nations through subsequent centuries. Let us gather from this loving eulogy of the Saint what distinctive features we can of his life and character.

In the Preface it is said—

“He was angelic in appearance, graceful in speech, holy in work, with talents of the highest order, and consummate prudence; he lived a soldier of Christ during thirty-four years on an island. He never could spend the space of even one hour without study, or prayer, or writing, or some other holy occupation. So incessantly was he engaged night and day in the unwearied exercise of fasting and watching, that the burden of each of these austerities would seem beyond the power of human endurance. And still in all these he was beloved by all, for a holy joy ever beaming on his face revealed the joy and gladness with which the Holy Spirit filled his inmost soul.”

Of the instances of his prophetic gifts one shows especially his sympathetic insight, in saving a boy who had been misunderstood and despised, by recognizing what he might yet become. “On another occasion, while the blessed

man was residing for a few months in the midland part of Hibernia, when founding Durrow, he was pleased to pay a visit to the Monastery of Clonmacnoise. As soon as it was known that he was there, all flocked from their little grange farms, near the Monastery, and along with those who were within it, ranged themselves with enthusiasm under the Abbot Alither ; then advancing beyond the enclosure of the Monastery, they went out as one man to meet St. Columba, as if he were an angel of the Lord. Humbly bowing down, with their faces to the ground, in his presence, they kissed him most reverently, and singing hymns of praise as they went, they conducted him with all honour to the Church. Over the Saint as he walked, a canopy made of wood was supported by four men walking by his side, lest the holy Abbot, St. Columba, should be troubled by the crowd of brethren pressing upon him. At that very time, a boy attached to the Monastery, who was mean in dress and look, and hitherto had not stood well in the opinions of the seniors, concealing himself as well as he could, came forward stealthily, that he might touch unperceived even the hem of the cloak which the blessed man wore, without his feeling or knowing about it.

This, however, did not escape the Saint, for he knew with the eyes of his soul what he could not see taking place behind him with the eyes of his body. Stopping therefore suddenly, and putting out his hand behind him, he seized the boy by the neck, and bringing him round, set him before his face. The crowd of bystanders cried out—‘Let him go, let him go; why do you touch that unfortunate and naughty boy?’ But the Saint solemnly uttered these prophetic words from his pure heart, ‘Suffer it to be so now, brethren!’ Then turning to the boy, who was in the greatest terror, he said, ‘My son, open thy mouth, and put out thy tongue.’ The boy did as he was bid, and in great alarm opened his mouth and put out his tongue: the Saint extended to it his holy hand, and after carefully blessing it, pronounced his prophecy in the following words—‘Though this boy appears to you now very contemptible and worthless, let no one on that account despise him. For, from this hour, not only will he not displease you, but he will give you every satisfaction. From day to day he shall advance by degrees in good conduct, and in the virtue of the soul; from this day, wisdom and prudence shall be more and more increased

in him, and great shall be his progress in this your community; his tongue shall also receive from God the gift of both wholesome doctrine and eloquence.' This was Ernene, son of Crasen, who was afterwards famous and most highly honoured in all the Churches of Scotia (Ireland)."

And another most delightful narrative there is, showing this his large-hearted recognition of goodness everywhere. Once, when he was travelling near Loch Ness, he was suddenly inspired by the Holy Ghost, and said to the brothers who accompanied him, "Let us go quickly to meet the holy angels who have been sent from the realm of the highest heaven to carry away with them the soul of a heathen, and now await our arrival there that we may baptize in due time, before his death, this man who has preserved his natural goodness through all his life to extreme old age." And having said thus much, the holy old man hurried his companions as much as he could, and walked before them till he came to Glen Urquhart; and here he found an aged man whose name was Emchat, who, on hearing the Word of God preached by the Saint, believed and was baptized, and immediately after, full of joy and safe from evil, and

accompanied by the angels who came to meet him, passed to the Lord. His son Krolec also believed, and was baptized, with all his house.

Another incident is more like an instance of second sight (or "telepathy"). "At another time," Adamnan writes, "in the Ionan island (Hy, now Iona), on a day when the tempest was fierce and the sea exceedingly boisterous, the Saint, as he sat in the house, gave orders to his brethren, saying, 'Prepare the guest-chamber quickly, and draw water to wash the stranger's feet.' One of the brethren upon this inquired, 'Who can cross the Sound safely, narrow though it be, on so perilous and stormy a day?' The Saint, on hearing this, thus made answer—'The Almighty has given a calm, even in this tempest, to a certain holy and excellent man, who will arrive here among us before evening.' And lo! the same day, the ship for which the brethren had some time been looking out, arrived, according to the Saint's prediction, and brought St. Cainnech."

Again and again he is said to have had this vision or consciousness of things afar off; of storms and battles, for instance, leading him to prayer for those in peril.

Sometimes he would exclaim suddenly, "Ring the church-bell, and summon the community to pray," it might be for King Aidan, his kinsman, in battle at this moment; or some one else in mortal danger.

On another day, when engaged in his mother-church, he suddenly cried out with a smile, "Columbanus has just now set out on a voyage to us, and is in great danger in the rolling tides of Breccan's whirlpool. He is sitting at the prow, and lifting both his hands to heaven; he is also blessing that angry and dreadful sea; but the ship he is in shall not be wrecked in the storm."

Sometimes it was an intense spiritual perception of some hidden sin in one present or absent; sometimes of the reality or unreality of penitence, a deep "discerning of spirits," a discrimination of the motives which led to gifts, and valuing each gift by the heart of the giver.

"Many presents were laid out in the court of the monastery, and he was giving the blessing; he specially pointed out one gift of a wealthy man. 'The mercy of God,' he said, 'attendeth the man who gave this, for his charity is to the poor, and his munificence.'

"Then he pointed out another of the many

gifts, and said, 'Of this wise and avaricious man's offering I cannot partake until he repent sincerely of his sin of avarice.'

"Now this saying was quickly circulated among the crowd, and soon reaching the ears of Columb, the son of Aid, he ran immediately to the Saint, and on bended knees repented of his sin, promising to forsake his former greedy habits. The Saint bade him rise, and from that moment he was cured of the fault of greediness, for he was truly a wise man, as was revealed to the Saint."

Here is another beautiful story of sympathy with a penitent.

"Another time the Saint was sitting on the top of the mountain which overhangs this our monastery, at some distance from it, and turning to his attendant Diormit, said to him, 'I am surprised that a certain ship from Scotia (Ireland) does not appear sooner: there is on board a certain wise man who has fallen into a great crime, but who, with tears of repentance, shall soon arrive.' Not long after, the attendant, looking to the south, saw the sail of a ship that was approaching the harbour. When its arrival was pointed out to the Saint, he got up quickly

and said, 'Let us go and meet this stranger, whose sincere penance is accepted by Christ.' As soon as Feachua came on shore he ran to meet the Saint, who was coming down to the shore, and, falling on his knees before him, lamented most bitterly with wailing and tears, and there, in the presence of all, made open confession of his sins. Then the Saint, also shedding tears, said to him, 'Arise, my son, and be comforted; the sins thou hast committed are forgiven thee, because, as it is written, "a humble and contrite heart God doth not despise!"' He then arose, and the Saint received him with great joy."

Another incident reveals his quick perception of spiritual ripeness and readiness for death.

"One Lord's day a loud cry was heard across the Sound of Mull. As soon as the Saint heard it, he said to the brethren who were then with him, 'Go directly, and bring here before me at once the strangers that have now arrived from a distant land.' They went accordingly, and ferried the strangers across. The Saint, after embracing them, asked them at once the object of their journey. In reply, they said, "We are come to reside with thee for the year.' The Saint replied, 'With me, as you say, you cannot

reside for a year unless you first take the Monastic vow.' When those who were present heard these words addressed to strangers who were only newly arrived, they wondered very much. But the elder brother, in answer to the Saint's remarks, replied, 'Although we never, up to the present time, entertained the thought before, yet we shall follow thy advice, believing that it cometh from God.' What more need I say? That very moment they entered the chapel with the Saint, and on bended knees devoutly took the Monastic vow. The Saint then turned to his monks and said, 'These two strangers, who are presenting themselves a living sacrifice to God, and within a short time are fulfilling a long time of Christian warfare, shall pass away in peace this very month to Christ our Lord!' The two brothers, on hearing this, gave thanks to God, and were led away to the guest-room; and within a month both the brothers fell sick and passed to the Lord with joy."

There is another poetical story of the way in which, when he had become too old and feeble to walk far, his spirit seemed to go forth to meet the sons of his family returning weary from their hard day's reaping in the fields.

“For as the brethren were returning in the evening to the monastery, each of them thought he felt something strange and unusual between the field on the plain and our monastery, which however they did not venture to speak of to each other. And so they had the same feeling for some days successively at the same place, and at the same hour in the evening. At last an elder brother said to the holy Baithen (who had questioned them), ‘As you have ordered me, I shall tell you what I observed on this spot. For both in the past few days, and even now, I perceive the fragrance of such a wonderful odour, just as if all the flowers on earth were gathered into one place; I feel also a glow of heat within me, not at all painful, but most pleasing, and a certain unusual and inexpressible joy poured into my heart, which on a sudden so refreshes and gladdens me, that I forget grief and weariness of every kind. Even the load, however weary, which I carry on my back, is in some mysterious way so much lightened from this place all the way to the monastery, that I do not seem to have any weight to bear.’ What need I add? All the other reapers in turn declared they had exactly the same feelings as the first had

described. All then knelt down together, and requested of the holy Baithen that he would learn and inform them of the yet unknown cause and origin of this wonderful relief which both he and they were feeling. 'Ye all know,' he immediately replied, 'our father Columba's tender care regarding us, and how, ever mindful of our toil, he is always grieved when we return later than usual to the monastery. And now because he cannot come in person on this occasion to meet us, his spirit cometh forth to us as we walk along, and conveyeth to us such great comfort.' Having heard these words they raised their hands to heaven with intense joy as they knelt, and venerated Christ in the holy and blessed man."

And we cannot omit a touching incident, showing his love of his own country, and also his sympathy with animals.

"For at another time while the Saint was living on Iona, he called one of the brothers, and thus addressed him: 'In the morning of the third day from this date thou must sit down on the western shores of this island, for a crane (heron), which is a stranger from the northern region of Hibernia, and hath been driven about

by various winds, shall come, weary and fatigued, after the ninth hour, and lie down before thee on the beach quite exhausted. Greet that bird tenderly, take it to some neighbouring house, where it may be kindly received, and carefully nursed and fed by thee, for three days and three nights. When the crane is refreshed with the three days' rest, and is unwilling to abide any longer with us, it shall fly back with renewed strength to the pleasant part of Scotia (Ireland), from which it originally hath come. 'This bird do I consign to thee with such special care because it cometh from our own native place.' The brother obeyed, and on the third day, after the ninth hour, he watched as he was bid for the arrival of the expected guest. As soon as the crane came and alighted on the shore, he took it up gently in its weakness, and carried it to a dwelling that was near, where in its hunger he fed it. On his return to the monastery in the evening, the saint, without any inquiry, but as stating a fact, said to him, 'God bless thee, my child, for thy kind attention to our foreign visitor, that shall not remain long on its journey, but return within three days to its old home.' As the saint predicted, so exactly

did the event prove, for after being nursed carefully for three days, the bird then gently rose on its wings to a great height in the sight of its hospitable entertainer, and marking for a little its path through the air homewards, it directed its course across the sea to Hibernia, straight as it could fly, on a calm day."

There are also previsions of the fate of men whom he saw to be hypocrites, and of the long life or speedy death of one and another. Most of these seem instances of keen spiritual insight or of his presence through prayer with the absent. Adamnan himself says, "Though absent in body, he was present in spirit, and could look on things that were widely apart, according to the words of St. Paul, 'He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.' Hence this same man of the Lord, St. Columba, when some of the brethren would sometimes inquire into the matter, did not deny but that by some Divine intuition, and through a wonderful expansion of his inner soul, he beheld the whole universe drawn together and laid open to his sight, as in one ray of the sun."

In Adamnan's Second Book on St. Columba's miraculous powers there are a few instances of

denunciation and judgment, and one or two that look rather like encountering black magic with white (*e. g.* conveying miraculous virtue into waters or pebbles). But the greater number are manifestations of mercy, healings of the sick, and also calming of storms on the deep, and in the hearts of men through faith and prayer. One story shows a beautiful sympathy with a poor man the Saint was afraid had scarcely been treated with sufficient consideration by some of his monks.

“At another time the Saint sent his monks to bring from the little farm of a peasant some bundles of twigs to build a dwelling. When they returned to the Saint, with a freight-ship laden with the foresaid bundles of twigs, they told the Saint that the poor man was very sorry on account of the loss. The Saint immediately gave them these directions, saying, ‘Lest we do the man any wrong, take to him from us twice three measures of barley, and let him sow it now in his arable land.’ According to the Saint’s orders, the corn was sent and delivered over to the poor man, who was called Findchan, with the above directions. He received them with thanks, but asked, ‘What good can any

corn do which is sown after midsummer, against the nature of this soil?’ But his wife, on the contrary, said, ‘Do what thou hast been ordered by the Saint, to whom the Lord will give whatsoever he asketh from Him.’ And the messengers likewise said further, ‘St. Columba, who sent us to thee with this gift, intrusted us also with this form of instruction regarding thy crop, saying, “Let that man trust in the omnipotence of God; his corn though sown now, when twelve days of the month of June are passed, shall be reaped in the beginning of the month of August.”’ The peasant accordingly ploughed and sowed, and the crop which against hope he sowed at the above-mentioned time, he gathered in ripe, to the admiration of all his neighbours.”

There is also a touching story of his care for his faithful servant Diormit.

“At another time, Diormit, the Saint’s faithful servant, was sick even unto death, and the Saint went to see him in his extremity. Having invoked the name of Christ, he stood at the bed of the sick man and prayed for him, saying, ‘O my Lord, be propitious to me, I beseech Thee, and take not away the soul of my faithful

attendant from its dwelling in the flesh whilst I live.' Having said this, he remained silent for a short time, and then again he spoke these words with his sacred mouth, 'My son shall not only not die at present, but will even live for many years after my death.' This prayer of the Saint was heard, for, on the instant that the Saint's prayer was made, Diormit was restored to perfect health, and lived also for many years after St. Columba had passed to the Lord."

There is another story of the effect of his prayer and counsel on a wife whose heart had turned against her husband, who was deformed. She wished to leave him, and professed her readiness to go on pilgrimage or into a nunnery, or anything rather than stay with him. But St. Columba insisted that she had no right to be a pilgrim or a nun, and would pray for nothing but that she might love her husband. Which prayer was answered; her heart was softened, "and from that day to the hour of death, the heart of the wife was firmly cemented with affection to her husband."

In the Third Book, on the Manifestations of Angels, there is a story, how on one occasion, when the Saint seems to have been very deter-

mined to have his own way about the coronation of one brother rather than another to be king, an angel came to him with a book of glass (apparently a mirror of the will of God), showing that not the brother he preferred, but another was the Divinely chosen king. The Saint however could not at once yield up his will; and on three successive nights the angel came and scourged him on the side, leaving a livid mark, which remained to the end of his life, until at last he acquiesced.

Again and again he was conscious of the death of those dear to him, when at a distance from him, and saw the angels bearing their souls to Paradise.

There is also a story of one of his monks having followed him secretly to the round grassy hill near the western shore of the island, looking over the Atlantic, and beheld him surrounded with white-robed companies of angels who stood around him as he prayed. This hill is still called the Angels' Hill in Iona in the language St. Columba spoke.

And many times, from the church or the cell in which he was praying, his "family" were dazzled by the shining of a marvellous brightness

of heavenly light, which the Saint always forbade their speaking about.

But once, when he was fasting three days and three nights in his cell, rays of surpassing brightness were seen streaming through the chinks of the wattled wooden hut, and through the key-hole, and from within was caught the music of spiritual songs such as the listeners had never heard before. And after that he expressed a wish that his friend and beloved disciple Baithen could have been present with him, that he also might have had these wondrous mysteries explained to him, and so have had made clear to him many obscure parts of the sacred Scriptures. But always, whatever these supernatural illuminations might mean, his smile was in itself an illumination ; we often hear of it, radiant, ecstatic, welcoming, amused. To that family at Iona the unfading light of “the holy joy ever beaming on his face revealed the joy and gladness with which the Holy Spirit filled his inmost soul.”

VI.

LAST YEARS OF ST. COLUMBA (FROM
ADAMNAN'S 'LIFE').

Of another vision of angels whom the Saint saw coming to meet his soul as if it were about to leave the body.

AT another time, while the blessed man was living in the Iovan Island (Hy, now Iona), his holy countenance one day was lighted up suddenly with strange transports of joy; and raising his eyes to heaven he was filled with delight, and rejoiced beyond measure. After an interval of a few seconds, that sweet and enchanting delight was changed into a mournful sadness. Now, the two men, who at the same hour were standing at the door of his hut, which was built on the higher ground, and were themselves also much afflicted with him—of whom the one was Lugne Mocublai, and the other a Saxon named Pilu—asked the cause of this sudden joy, and of the sorrow which followed. The Saint said to them, “Go in peace, and do not ask me now to explain the cause of either that joy or that sadness.” On hearing this they humbly asked him, kneeling before him in tears, and with faces sunk to the ground, to grant

their desire of knowing something concerning that matter which at that same hour had been revealed to the Saint. Seeing them so much afflicted, he said, "On account of my love to you, I do not wish you to be in sadness; but you must first promise me never to disclose to any one during my life the secret you seek to know." They made of course the promise at once according to his request, and then, when the promise was made, the venerable man spake to them thus: "On this very day, thirty years of my sojourn in Britain have been completed, and meanwhile for many days past I have been devoutly asking of my Lord to release me from my dwelling here at the end of this thirtieth year, and to call me thither to my heavenly fatherland. And this was the cause of that joy of mine, of which in sorrowful mood you ask me. For I saw the holy angels sent down from the lofty throne to meet my soul when it is taken from the flesh. But, behold now they are stopped suddenly, and stand on a rock at the other side of the Sound of our island, evidently being anxious to come near me and deliver me from the body. But they are not allowed to come nearer, because, that thing which God granted me after praying

with my whole strength—namely, that I might pass from the world to Him on this day—He hath changed in a moment in His listening to the prayers of so many Churches for me. These Churches have no doubt prayed as the Lord hath granted, so that, though it is against my ardent wish, four years from this day are added for me to abide in the flesh. Such a sad delay as this was fitly the cause of the grief to-day. At the end of these four years, then, which by God's favour my life is yet to see, I shall pass away suddenly, without any previous bodily sickness, and depart with joy to the Lord, accompanied by His holy angels, who shall come to me at that hour."

According to these words, which the venerable man uttered, it is said, with much sorrow and grief, and even many tears, he afterwards abode in the flesh for four years.

*How our Patron St. Columba passed to the Lord.*¹

Towards the end of the above-mentioned four years—and as a true prophet, he knew long before that his death would follow the close of that

¹ St. Adamnan's *Life*, Book III. chap. xxiv.

period—the old man, worn out with age, went in a cart one day in the month of May, as we mentioned in the preceding second book, to visit some of the brethren who were at work. And having found them at work on the western side of the Iovan island (Hy, now Iona), he began to speak to them that day, saying, “During the paschal solemnities in the month of April now past, with desire have I desired to depart to Christ the Lord, as He had allowed me, if I preferred it. But lest a joyous festival should be turned for you into mourning, I thought it better to put off for a little longer the time of my departure from the world.” The beloved monks all the while they were hearing this sad news were greatly afflicted, and he endeavoured as well as he could to cheer them with words of consolation. Then having done this, he turned his face to the east, still seated as he was in his chariot, and blessed the island with its inhabitants; and from that day to the present, as we have stated in the Book above-mentioned, the venomous reptiles with the three forked tongues could do no manner of harm to man or beast. After uttering these words of blessing the Saint was carried back to his monastery.

Then again, a few days afterwards, while he was celebrating the solemn offices of the Mass, as usual on the Lord's Day, the face of the venerable man, as his eyes were raised to heaven, suddenly appeared as if suffused with a ruddy glow, for, as it is written, "A glad heart maketh a cheerful countenance." For at that same hour he alone saw an angel of the Lord hovering above within the walls of his oratory; and as the lovely and tranquil aspect of the holy angels infuses joy and exultation into the hearts of the elect, this was the cause of that sudden joy infused into the blessed man. When those who were present on the occasion inquired as to the cause of that joy with which he was evidently inspired, the Saint, looking upwards, gave them this reply: "Wonderful and unspeakable is the subtlety of the angelic nature! For lo! an angel of the Lord, who was sent to demand a certain deposit dear to God, hath, after looking down upon us within the church, and blessing us, returned again through the roof of the church, without leaving any trace of his passage out." Thus spoke the Saint. But none of the bystanders could understand what kind of a deposit the angel was sent to demand. Our

patron, however, gave the name of a holy deposit to his own soul, that had been entrusted to him by God; and after an interval of six days from that time, as shall be related further on, he departed to the Lord on the night of the Lord's day.

In the end, then, of this same week, that is on the day of the Sabbath, the venerable man and his pious attendant, Diormit, went to bless the barn which was near at hand. When the Saint had entered in and blessed it, and two heaps of winnowed corn that were in it, he gave expression to his thanks in these words, saying, "I heartily congratulate you, my beloved monks, that this year also, if I am obliged to depart from you, you will have a sufficient supply for the year."

On hearing this, Diormit, his attendant, began to feel sad, and said, "This year, at this time, father, thou very often vexest us by so frequently making mention of thy leaving us."

But the Saint replied to him, "I have a little secret address to make to thee, and if thou wilt promise me faithfully not to reveal it to any one before my death, I shall be able to speak to thee with more freedom about my departure." When

his attendant had on bended knees made the promise as the Saint desired, the venerable man thus resumed his address—"This day in the Holy Scriptures is called the Sabbath, which means rest. And this day is indeed a Sabbath to me, for it is the last day of my present laborious life, and on it I rest after the fatigues of my labours; and this night at midnight, which commenceth the solemn Lord's Day, I shall, according to the saying of Scripture, go the way of our fathers. For already my Lord Jesus Christ deigneth to invite me; and to Him, I say, in the middle of this night shall I depart, at His invitation. For so it hath been revealed to me by the Lord Himself."

The attendant, hearing these sad words, began to weep bitterly, and the Saint endeavoured to console him as well as he could.

After this the Saint left the barn, and in going back to the monastery, rested half-way at a place where a cross, which was afterwards erected, and is standing to this day, fixed into a millstone, may be observed on the roadside. While the Saint, as I have said, bowed down with old age, sat there to rest a little, behold there came up to him a white pack-horse, the same that used; as

a willing servant, to carry the milk-vessels from the cowshed to the monastery. It came up to the Saint and, strange to say, laid its head on his bosom—inspired, I believe, by God to do so, as each animal is gifted with the knowledge of things according to the will of the Creator; and knowing that its master was soon about to leave it, and that it would see him no more, began to utter plaintive cries, and like a human being, to shed copious tears on the Saint's bosom, foaming and greatly wailing. The attendant seeing this, began to drive the weeping mourner away; but the Saint forbade him, saying: "Let it alone, as it is so fond of me; let it pour out its bitter grief into my bosom. Lo! thou, as thou art a man, and hast a rational soul, canst know nothing of my departure hence, except what I myself have just told you; but to this brute beast, devoid of reason, the Creator Himself hath evidently in some way made it known that its master is going to leave it." And saying this, the Saint blessed the work-horse, which turned away from him in sadness.

Then leaving this spot, he ascended the hill that overlooketh the monastery, and stood for some little time on its summit; and as he stood

there with both hands uplifted, he blessed his monastery, saying:—

“Small and mean though this place is, yet it shall be held in great and unusual honour, not only by Scotic kings and people, but also by rulers of foreign and barbarous nations, and by their subjects; the Saints also even of other Churches shall regard it with no common reverence.”

After these words, he descended the hill, and having returned to the monastery, sat in his hut transcribing the Psalter; and coming to that verse of the thirty-third psalm (Eng. Vers., Ps. xxxiv.) where it is written, “They that seek the Lord shall want no manner of thing that is good,”—“Here,” said he, “at the end of the page, I must stop; and what follows let Baithene write.”

The last verse he had written was very applicable to the Saint who was about to depart, and to whom eternal goods shall never be wanting; while the one that followeth is equally applicable to the father who succeeded him, the instructor of his spiritual children: “Come, ye children, and hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord;” and indeed he succeeded him as

recommended by him, not only in teaching, but also in writing.

Having written the afore-mentioned verse at the end of the page, the Saint went to the Church to the nocturnal vigils of the Lord's Day; and so soon as this was over, he returned to his chamber, and spent the remainder of the night on his bed, where he had a bare flag for his couch, and for his pillow a stone, which stands to this day as a kind of monument beside his grave. While then he was reclining there, he gave his last instructions to the brethren, in the hearing of his attendant alone, saying, "These, O my children, are the last words I address to you, that ye be at peace, and have unfeigned charity among yourselves; and if ye thus follow the example of the holy fathers, God, the Comforter of the good, will be your Helper, and I, abiding with Him, will intercede for you; and He will not only give you sufficient to supply the wants of this present life, but will also bestow on you the good and eternal rewards which are laid up for those that keep His commandments." Thus far have the last words of our venerable patron, as he was about to leave this weary pilgrimage for his heavenly country, been preserved for recital

in our brief narrative. After these words, as the happy hour of his departure gradually approached, the Saint became silent. Then as soon as the bell tolled at midnight, he rose hastily, went to church, and running more quickly than the rest, he entered it alone, and knelt down in prayer beside the altar. At the same moment his attendant, Diormit, who more slowly followed him, saw from a distance that the whole interior of the church was filled with a heavenly light in the direction of the Saint. And as he drew near to the door, the same light he had seen, and which was also seen by a few brethren standing at a distance, quickly disappeared. Diormit therefore entering the church, cried out in a mournful voice, "Where art thou, father?" And feeling his way in the darkness, as the brethren had not yet brought in the lights, he found the Saint lying before the altar; and raising him up a little, he sat down beside him, and laid his holy head on his bosom. Meanwhile the rest of the monks ran in hastily in a body with their lights, and beholding their dying father, burst into lamentations. And the Saint, as we have been told by some who were present, even before his soul departed, opened wide his eyes and looked

round him from side to side, with a countenance full of wonderful joy and gladness, no doubt seeing the holy angels coming to meet him. Diormit then raised the holy right hand of the Saint, that he might bless his assembled monks. And the venerable father himself moved his hand at the same time, as well as he was able ; that as he could not in words, while his soul was departing, he might at least, by the motion of his hand, be seen to bless his brethren. And having given them his benediction in this way, he immediately breathed his last. After his soul had left the tabernacle of the body, his face still continued ruddy, and brightened in a wonderful way by his vision of the angels, and that to such a degree that he had the appearance, not so much of one dead, as of one alive and sleeping. Meanwhile the whole church resounded with loud lamentations of grief.

* * * * *

After his holy soul had departed, and the matin hymns were finished, his sacred body was carried by the brethren, chanting psalms, from the church back to his chamber, from which a little before he had come alive ; and his obsequies were celebrated with all due honour and reverence,

for three days and as many nights. And when these sweet praises of God were ended, the venerable body of our holy and blessed patron was wrapped in a clean shroud of fine linen, and being placed in the coffin prepared for it, was buried with all due veneration, to rise again with lustrous and eternal brightness. And now near the close of this book, we shall relate what hath been told us by persons cognizant of the facts, regarding the above-mentioned three days, during which his obsequies were celebrated in due ecclesiastical form. It happened on one occasion that a certain brother speaking with great simplicity in the presence of the holy and venerable man, said to him, "After thy death all the people of these provinces will row across to the Iovan island (Hy, now Iona), to celebrate thine obsequies, and will entirely fill it." Hearing this said, the Saint immediately replied: "No, my child, the event will not turn out as thou sayest, for a promiscuous throng of people shall not by any means be able to come to my obsequies: none but the monks of my monastery will perform my funeral rites, and grace the last offices bestowed upon me." And the fulfilment of this prophecy was brought about immediately after his death by God's

Almighty power ; for there arose a storm of wind without rain, which blew so violently during those three days and nights of his obsequies, that it entirely prevented every one from crossing the Sound in his little boat. And immediately after the interment of the blessed man, the storm was quelled at once, the wind ceased, and the whole sea became calm.

Let the reader therefore think in what and how great honour our illustrious patron was held by God, seeing that, while he was still in the mortal flesh, God was pleased at his prayer to quell the storms and to calm the seas ; and again, when he found it necessary, as on the occasion just mentioned, the gales of wind arose as he wished, and the sea was lashed into fury ; and this storm, as hath been said, was immediately, so soon as his funeral rites were performed, changed into a great calm. Such, then, was the end of our illustrious patron's life, and such is an earnest of all his merits.

IONA AND ENGLAND.

ST. AIDAN.

ST. OSWALD.

ST. HILDA.

ST. COLMAN.

ST. CHAD.

ST. CUTHBERT.

ST. AIDAN.

WE come to a new century, and in some respects to a new spiritual climate. The chief biographer of the group of Saints who spent their lives in Christianizing England is not an adoring disciple, but a candid and generous opponent. To pass from Adamnan to Bede is like stepping from the soft crooning of old poetical songs and stories by a Highland fireside or the wail or triumph of coronach or march among Highland hills into a modern library. You feel in the presence, not of Legend, through whose lovely halo you have to penetrate to the fact which is certainly there, but of History, carefully weighing values and measuring proportions, and sifting fact from fancy.

We are still indeed in a land of miracles and marvels, where the laws of evidence as well as the laws of gravitation do not weigh against the conviction that spirit is greater than matter; that the unseen world is not less but more real than the seen; where visions and prophecies are expected

as the natural phenomena of supernatural life. But the tone is different. There is in Bede that quality so rare in any age, or party, of readiness to believe good, and generous candour to relate it of people who seriously differ from our own especial section of thought,—the quality which makes Bede not only a Saint, but an historian; which is perhaps essentially what constitutes saintliness in a historian, especially an ecclesiastical or religious historian, being the quality apparently most difficult to maintain under his own peculiar temptations; the quality which distinguishes an historian from a religious pamphleteer however brilliant, or a mere homilist however excellent.

Bede carries us back to the words of the earliest Church history, that of the author of the Acts of the Apostles:—“Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the Word, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things from the first, to write unto thee.”¹

¹ St. Luke i. Revised Version.

Back to St. Luke, and on to the most conscientious historical searcher of documents, and questioner of witnesses and student of geographical environment in our own times.

In reading Bede we feel that England and English history have begun, and, in a sense, the modern world.

We begin with Aidan and Oswald, the great English King and the great Celtic Missionary. Their lives are so intertwined that they must be set in one picture. The type of Oswald's piety is so essentially that of Iona and of Aidan, and Aidan so entirely lives in his mission and his disciples. It seems best to give the beautiful double story in the words of Bede himself. They make us hear the accent of the places and races, and breathe the atmosphere of the times as nothing else can.

In 635, the victory of Heavensfield was won over Penda, the pagan King of Mercia, and Aidan came from Iona at Oswald's request. In 654, after the Synod of Whitby, St. Colman, Aidan's successor, left Northumbria and returned to Scotland.

In less than twenty years the deep impression was made on Northumbria, which made it

a centre of Christian missions for the rest of England.

Of the company of great and good men and women who brought this about, four are well known to us—King Oswald, Bishop Aidan, Bishop Colman, and the Abbess Hilda.

We begin with King Oswald. As much as possible it seems best to give the story in the words of Bede himself.

Oswald's early days were spent in banishment in Scotland, after his father King Ethelfrith the Ravager's death. It was this which led to all the good that followed; for during those years of exile he must have learned to know the monks of Iona little more than thirty years after St. Columba's death. He must have been about twenty when he first fled with his brothers to Scotland. It was among the Picts, the converts of St. Columba in Argyleshire and the Western Isles, that the young princes found refuge and hospitality. There they were baptized, and received Christianity according to the Irish teaching. On Oswald that teaching made an impression never effaced; especially, it seems, the memory of St. Columba himself. All he had been and done and taught stamped itself deeply

on his heart and imagination. He must probably have made the familiar signal from the red rocks of Mull, and been ferried across to the white beaches of Iona in one of the coracles of the monastery. He would have been welcomed in the guest-chamber, where the tall form and radiant smile and rich, deep voice of Columba used to greet his guests. He would be shown the wooden hut, now grown so sacred, where Columba used to enter and shut the door and pray to the Father who seeth in secret, which his presence and other presences which came to him here, seemed to his disciples to illuminate, and where the music of the poet's voice was heard in hymns, his own or those of the Church. He would see the stones before the altar where St. Columba was laid, dying, and lifted up his dying hand in his last benediction. He would walk to the hill where the angels came around him, and the many-coloured beach where he landed in the coracle, and the cairn where he turned his back on his beloved Iona, and the little hill (Tor Abb) where he gave his benediction to Iona and all that were to be taught there.

It would probably be in Iona that he would

receive Christian instruction and training as a catechumen, and be baptized.

And when he was recalled to his own country, and the weary tumultuous year was over when his apostate brothers fought and reigned, and "abandoned the heavenly kingdom for the earthly," which they so soon lost by death, and he himself became king, he went forth to meet the heathen King Penda on the field, afterwards called Heaven-field, by the old Roman wall. And there the power of Iona came on him, and he had the vision of St. Columba, which encouraged him for the battle.

It is thus related by Adamnan: "In the dreadful crash of wars he (Columba) obtained from God, by the virtue of prayer, that some kings should be conquered, and others come off victorious. And such a grace as this he enjoyed, not only while alive in this world, but even after his departure from the flesh, as God, from whom all the Saints derive their honour, has made him still a victorious and most valiant champion in the battle. I shall give one example of especial honour conferred by Almighty God on this honourable man, the event having occurred the day before the Saxon prince Oswald

went forth to fight with Catlon (Ceadualla of Bede), a very valiant King of the Britons. For as this same King Oswald, after pitching his camp, in readiness for the battle, was sleeping one day on a pillow in his tent, he saw St. Columba in a vision, beaming with angelic brightness, and of figure so majestic that his head seemed to touch the clouds. The blessed man having announced his name to the King, stood in the midst of the camp, and covered it all with his brilliant garment, except at one small distant point; and at the same time he uttered those cheering words which the Lord spake to Jesua Ben Nun before the passage of the Jordan, after Moses' death, saying, 'Be strong, and of a good courage; behold, I shall be with thee,' &c. Then St. Columba, having said these words to the King in the vision, added, 'March out this following night from your camp to battle, for on this occasion the Lord has granted to me that your foes shall be put to flight, that your enemy Catlon shall be delivered into your hands, and that after the battle you shall return in triumph and have a happy reign.' The King awakening at these words, assembled his council and related the

vision, at which they were all encouraged; and so the whole people promised that after their return from the war, they would believe and be baptized, for up to that time all that Saxon land had been wrapt in the darkness of paganism and ignorance, with the exception of King Oswald and the twelve men who were baptized with him during his exile among the Scots. What more need I say? On the very next night, King Oswald, as he had been directed in the vision, went forth from his camp to battle, and had a much smaller army than the numerous hosts opposed to him, yet he obtained from the Lord, according to His promise, an easy and decisive victory over King Catlon; and the conqueror, on his return after the battle, was ever after established by God as the Bretwalda of all Britain. I, Adamnan, had this narrative from the lips of my predecessor, the Abbot Failhe, who solemnly declared that he had himself heard King Oswald relating this same vision to Segine the Abbot.”

“And so with the Cross, the first erected in Northumbria, erected in the field, and the vision of St. Columba in his heart, Oswald and his little army,” Bede says, “advanced towards the enemy

with the first dawn of day, and obtained the victory, as their faith deserved.”

Bede tells the story, thus prefacing it by speaking of Oswald's exile.

“For all the time that Edwin reigned, the sons of the aforesaid Ethelfrid, who had reigned before him, with many of the nobility, lived in banishment among the Picts or Scots, and were there instructed according to the doctrine of the Scots, and received the grace of baptism. Upon the death of the king (Edwin), their enemy, they returned home.

“Oswald, one of these sons, a man beloved of God, King after the death of his brother Eanfrid, advanced with an army, small indeed in number, but strengthened with the faith of Christ; and the impious commander of the Britons was slain, though he had most numerous forces, which he boasted nothing could withstand, at a place in the English tongue called Denisesburn, that is Denis's-brook.

“The place is shown to this day, and held in much veneration, where Oswald, being about to engage, erected the sign of the holy cross, and on his knees prayed to God that He would assist His worshippers in their great distress. It is

further reported that the cross being made in haste, and the hole dug in which it was to be fixed, the King himself, full of faith, laid hold of it and held it with both his hands, till it was set fast by throwing in the earth; and this done, raising his voice, he cried to his army, 'Let us all kneel, and jointly beseech the true and living God Almighty, in His mercy to defend us from the haughty and fierce enemy; for He knows that we have undertaken a just war for the safety of our nation.' All did as he commanded. The same Oswald, as soon as he ascended the throne, being desirous that all his nation should receive the Christian faith, whereof he had found happy experience in vanquishing the barbarians, sent to the elders of the Scots, among whom himself and his followers, when in banishment, had received the sacrament of baptism, desiring they would send him a bishop, by whose instruction and ministry the English nation, which he governed, might be taught the advantages, and receive the sacraments of the Christian faith. Nor were they slow in granting his request; but sent him Bishop Aidan, a man of singular meekness, piety, and moderation, zealous in the cause of

God, though not altogether according to knowledge, for he was wont to keep Easter Sunday according to the custom of his country.

“ From (Iona) the aforesaid island and college of monks, was Aidan sent to instruct the English nation in Christ, having received the dignity of a bishop at the time when Segenius, abbot and priest, presided over that monastery; whence among other instructions for life he left the clergy a most salutary example of abstinence or continence; it was the highest commendation of his doctrine with all men, that he taught no otherwise than he and his followers had lived, for he neither sought nor loved anything of this world, but delighted in distributing immediately among the poor whatsoever was given him by the King or rich men of the world. He was wont to traverse both town and country on foot, never on horseback, unless compelled by some urgent necessity; and wherever in his way he saw any, either rich or poor, he invited them, if infidels, to embrace the mystery of the faith, or if they were believers to strengthen them in the faith, and to stir them up by words and actions to alms and good works.

“ His course of life was so different from the

slothfulness of our times, that all those who bore him company, whether they were shorn monks or laymen, were employed in meditation, that is, either in reading the Scriptures or learning psalms. This was the daily employment of himself and all those who were with him, wheresoever they went; and if it happened, which was but seldom, that he was invited to eat with the King, he went with one or two clerks, and having taken a small repast made haste to be gone with them either to read or to write. At that time many religious men and women, stirred up by his example, adopted the custom of fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays, till the ninth hour, throughout the year, except during the fifty days after Easter. He never gave money to the powerful men of the world, but only meat, if he happened to entertain them; and on the contrary, whatsoever gifts of money he received from the rich, he either distributed them, as has been said, to the use of the poor, or bestowed them in ransoming such as had been wrongfully sold for slaves. Moreover, he afterwards made many of those he had ransomed his disciples, and after having taught and instructed them, advanced them to the order of priesthood.

“It is reported, that when King Oswald had asked a bishop of the Scots to administer the word of faith to him and his nation, there was first sent to him another man of more austere disposition, who meeting with no success, and being unregarded by the English people, returned home, and in an assembly of the elders reported, that he had not been able to do any good to the nation he had been sent to preach to, because they were uncivilized men and of a stubborn and barbarous disposition. They, as it testified, in a great council seriously debated what was to be done, being desirous that the nation should receive the salvation it demanded, and grieving that they had not received the preacher sent to them. Then said Aidan, who was also present in the council, to the priest then spoken of: ‘I am of opinion, brother, that you were more severe to your unlearned hearers than you ought to have been, and did not at first, conformably to the apostolic rule, give them the milk of more easy doctrine, till being by degrees nourished with the Word of God, they should be capable of greater perfection, and be able to practise God’s sublimer precepts.’ Having heard these words, all present began diligently to weigh what

he had said, and presently concluded, that he deserved to be made a bishop, and ought to be sent to instruct the incredulous and unlearned, since he was found to be endued with singular discretion, which is the mother of other virtues, and accordingly being ordained, they sent him to their friend King Oswald to preach, and he, as time proved, afterwards appeared to possess all other virtues, as well as the discretion for which he was before remarkable.

“King Oswald, with the nation of the English which he governed, being instructed by the teaching of this most reverend prelate, not only learned to hope for a heavenly kingdom unknown to his progenitors, but also obtained of the same one Almighty God, who made heaven and earth, larger earthly kingdoms than any of his ancestors. In short, he brought under his dominion all the nations and provinces of Britain, which are divided into four languages, viz. the Britons, the Picts, the Scots, and the English. When raised to that height of dominion, wonderful to relate, he always continued humble, affable, and generous to the poor and strangers.

“In short, it is reported that when he was once sitting at dinner on the holy day of Easter, with

the aforesaid bishop, a silver dish full of dainties before him, and they were just ready to bless the bread, the servant whom he had appointed to relieve the poor came in on a sudden, and told the King that a great multitude of needy persons from all parts were sitting in the streets begging some alms of the King; he immediately ordered the meat set before him to be carried to the poor, and the dish to be cut in pieces and divided among them. At which sight the bishop, who sat by him, much taken with such an act of piety, laid hold of his right hand and said, ‘May this hand never grow old.’

“On the arrival of the bishop, the King appointed him his episcopal see in the isle of Lindisfarne, as he desired. Which place, as the tide flows and ebbs twice a day, is enclosed by the waves of the sea like an island; and again twice in the day, when the shore is left dry, becomes contiguous to the land. The King also humbly and willingly in all cases giving ear to his admonitions, industriously applied himself to build and extend the Church of Christ in his kingdom; wherein, the bishop, who was not skilful in the English tongue, preached the gospel; it was most delightful to see the King himself interpreting the Word

of God to his commanders and ministers, for he had perfectly learned the language of the Scots during his long banishment. From that time many of the Scots came daily into Britain, and with great devotion preached the Word to those provinces of the English over which King Oswald reigned, and those among them that had received priest's orders, administered to them the grace of baptism. Churches were built in several places; the people joyfully flocked together to hear the Word; money and lands were given of the King's bounty to build monasteries; the English, great and small, were, by their Scottish masters, instructed in the rules and observances of regular discipline, for most of them that came to preach were monks. Bishop Aidan was himself a monk of the island of Hii, whose monastery was for a long time the chief of almost all those of the northern Scots, and all those of the Picts, and had the direction of their people. That island belongs to Britain, being divided from it by a small area of the sea, but had been long since given by the Picts, who inhabit those parts of Britain, to the Scottish monks, because they had received the faith of Christ through their preaching."

So for nine years the Christian king and bishop worked together; "Oswald, the most Christian King of the Northumbrians" (Bede writes), "reigned nine years. After which period he was killed in a great battle, by the same pagan nation and pagan King of the Mercians" (Penda) "who had slain his predecessor Edwin, at a place called in the English tongue Haversfield, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, on the fifth day of the month of August."

And then, after showing how his holiness was proved by the miracles wrought after his death, Bede says—"For it is not to be wondered that the prayers of that king who was then reigning with our Lord should be very efficacious with Him, since he, whilst yet governing his temporal kingdom, was also wont to pray and take more pains for that which is eternal. In short, it is often reported that he continued in prayer from the hour of morning thanksgiving till it was day; and that by reason of his constant custom of praying and giving thanks to God, he was wont always, wherever he sate, to hold his hands turned up on his knees. It is also given out, and become a proverb, 'That he ended his life in prayer'; for when he was beset with weapons

and enemies" (at the battle of Haversfield), "he perceived he must immediately be killed, and prayed to God for the souls of his army. Whence it is proverbially said—'*Lord have mercy on their souls, said Oswald, as he fell to the ground.*'"

"Every inch a king," indeed, from first to last; from first to last living and dying, not for himself, but for his people, directing the nation, consolidating the various tribes into a nation, a nation gathered around its king, a nation interwoven with the Church; restraining all evil, promoting all good, on his throne ever with his "Father who seeth in secret," as in an oratory; in his most secret prayers always with his people—"Our Father, who art in heaven"; at his banquet-table never out of hearing of the cry of the Lazarus at the gate, sending when needed his own meat to be their food, his own silver dish to be their alms.

It must have been with a heart heavy with a weight of sorrow and also of unutterably thankful joy, that Aidan heard of his royal disciple and son's dying words. Aidan survived him nine years (642—651). During those years the kingdom was divided between Oswald's younger

brother Osric, and Oswin, nephew of the previous King Edwin, "a man of wonderful piety and devotion, who governed the Province of Deira seven years in great prosperity, and was himself beloved of all men."

It was evidently with Oswin, not with Oswald's brother Oswy, that Aidan had sympathy. "Oswin was of a graceful aspect, and tall of stature, affable of discourse, courteous in behaviour, and most bountiful as well to the ignoble as the noble; so that he was beloved by all men for his qualities of body and mind, and persons of the first rank came from almost all provinces to serve him. Among other endowments, if I may so express it, humility is said to have been the greatest."

With this second saintly, generous young king, Aidan must have felt once more as if Oswald were with him still; and this friendship between young and old, the kingly son and saintly father, lasted almost to the end of Aidan's life.

Most touching is the instance Bede gives of the King's humility and the bishop's affection—

"Oswin had given an extraordinarily fine horse to Bishop Aidan, which he might either

use in crossing rivers, or in performing a journey of any urgent necessity, though he was wont to travel ordinarily on foot. Some short time after, a poor man meeting him, and asking alms, he immediately dismounted, and ordered the horse, with all his royal furniture, to be given to the beggar; for he was very compassionate, a great friend to the poor, and as it were the father of the wretched. This being told to the King, when they were going in to dinner, he said to the bishop, ‘Why would you, my lord bishop, give the poor man that royal horse, which was necessary for your use? Had we not many other horses of less value, and of other sorts, which would have been good enough to give to the poor, and not to give that horse, which I had particularly chosen for yourself?’ To whom the bishop instantly answered, ‘What is it you say, O king? Is that foal of a mare more dear to you than the son of God?’ Upon this they went in to dinner, and the bishop sat in his place; but the King, who was come from hunting, stood warming himself with his attendants at the fire. Then on a sudden, whilst he was warming himself, calling to mind what the bishop had said to him, he ungirt his sword, and gave it to a

servant, and in a hasty manner fell down at the bishop's feet beseeching him to forgive him. 'For from this time forward,' said he, 'I will never speak any more of this, nor will I judge of what or how much of our money you shall give to the sons of God.' The bishop was much moved at this sight, and starting up, raised him, saying, 'He was entirely reconciled to him, if he would sit down to his meat and lay aside all sorrow.' The King at the bishop's command and request beginning to be merry, the bishop on the other hand grew so melancholy as to shed tears. His priest then asking him in the language of his country, which the King and his servants did not understand, why he wept, 'I know,' said he, 'that the King will not live long; for I never before saw so humble a king; whence I conclude that he will soon be snatched out of this life, because this nation is not worthy of such a ruler.' Not long after, the bishop's prediction was fulfilled by the King's death, as has been said above. But Bishop Aidan himself was also taken out of this world twelve days after the King he loved, on the 31st of August, to receive the eternal reward of his labours from our Lord."

Oswy apparently would not brook to be on a

common or neighbouring throne with one so popular. Oswald's kingdom seems to have been shared between them; war arose between Oswin's Province of Deira and Oswy's of Bernicia and the rest of Northumbria.

Oswin, feeling his forces inadequate, disbanded them, apparently not choosing to expose his followers to a defeat, in order to assert his own rights. "He himself, with only one trusty soldier, withdrew and lay concealed in the house of Earl Hinwald, whom he believed to be his most assured friend. But alas! it was otherwise, and Oswy in a detestable manner, by the hands of his commander, slew him and the soldier aforesaid." "Cruelly murdered him," it is said in another place; very strong words from the gentle Bede, especially when we remember that it was Oswy who convened the great Synod of Whitby, and gave the final decision against the Celtic monks which sent St. Colman out of Northumbria, and gave the victory to Wilfrid and the Roman authority which Bede so strongly supported.

This second death, the cutting off of this second royal, holy, loving life, seems to have given the death-blow to Aidan. He only survived the

murdered Oswin twelve days. "Aidan was in the King's country house, not far from the city (of Bamborough), at the time when death separated him from his body, after he had been bishop sixteen years ; for having a church and a chamber there, he was wont often to go and stay there" (from the island of Lindisfarne close by and in sight), "and to make excursions to preach in the country round about, which he likewise did at other of the King's country seats, having nothing of his own besides his church and a few fields about it. When he was sick, they set up a tent close to the wall at the west end of the church, by which it happened that he gave up the ghost, leaning against a post that was on the outside to strengthen the wall. He died in the 21st year of his episcopacy, the last day of the month of August. His body was thence translated to Lindisfarne, and buried in the churchyard belonging to the brethren."

This was in 642, two years before the Synod convened by King Oswy at Whitby, so that Aidan was spared the bewildering pain, as it would seem it must have been, of seeing his work broken up, and his faithful monks and disciples, Celtic and English, driven to abandon the land

of his labours, by the King who had murdered his beloved and saintly Oswin.

Afterwards, Bede tells us, a monastery was built at the place where Oswin was slain, where prayers were to be offered up daily for the souls of the two kings—him who had been murdered, and him who commanded him to be killed.

But this Aidan did not stay in this world, nor did his disciples stay in this country, to see.

Bede records two miracles believed to have been wrought by Aidan's prayers—one by means of pouring oil on a stormy sea; the other by a sudden change of wind, such as happened when the sea was threatening the dykes at the siege of Leyden, when the city was saved from Alva.

The delight of these stories to us is the generous testimony of Bede to Aidan's character, and the universal honour in which it was held. In all ecclesiastical history there are few things nobler than this witness of the father of English history *against* the king who had brought about the victory of his own party, and *for* the Saint from whom he differed.

“How great the merits of Aidan were, was made manifest by the all-seeing Judge, with the testimony of miracles, whereof it will suffice to men-

tion three as a memorial. A certain priest whose name was Utta, a man of great gravity and sincerity, and on that account honoured by all men, even the princes of the world, being ordered to Kent, to bring from thence, as wife for King Oswy, Eanfleda, the daughter of King Edwin, who had been carried thither when her father was killed; and intending to go thither by land, but to return with the virgin by sea, repaired to Bishop Aidan, entreating him to offer up his prayers to our Lord for him and his company, who were then to set out on their journey. He, blessing and recommending them to our Lord, at the same time gave them some holy oil, saying, 'I know that when you go abroad, you will meet with a storm and contrary wind, but do you remember to cast this oil I give you into the sea, and the wind shall cease immediately; and you will have pleasant calm weather, and return home safe.' All which fell out as the bishop had predicted. For, in the first place, the winds raging, the sailors endeavoured to ride it out at anchor, but all to no purpose; for the sea breaking in on all sides, and the ship beginning to be filled with water, they all concluded that certain death was at hand; the priest at last, re-

remembering the bishop's words, laid hold of the phial, and cast some of the oil into the sea, which, as had been foretold, became presently calm. Thus it came to pass that the man of God, by the spirit of prophecy, foretold the storm that was to happen, and by virtue of the same spirit, though absent, appeased the same. Which miracle was not told me by a person of little credit, but by Cynemund, a most faithful priest of our church, who declared that it was related to him by Utta, the priest, on and by whom the same was wrought.

* * * * *

“Another notable miracle of the same father is related by many such as were likely to have knowledge thereof; for during the time that he was bishop, the hostile army of the Mercians, under the command of Penda, cruelly ravaged the country of the Northumbrians far and near, even to the royal city; which has its name from Bebba, formerly its queen. Not being able to enter it by force, or by a long siege, he endeavoured to burn it; and having destroyed all the villages in the neighbourhood of the city, he brought to it an immense quantity of planks, beams, wattles, and thatch, wherewith he encom-

passed the place to a great height on the land side, and when the wind set upon it, he fired the mass, designing to burn the town.

“At that time the most reverend Bishop Aidan resided in the isle of Farne, which is nearly two miles from the city; for thither he was wont often to retire to pray in private, that he might be undisturbed. Indeed this solitary residence of his is to this day shown in that island. When he saw the flames of fire and the smoke carried by the boisterous wind above the city walls, he is reported, with eyes and hands lifted up to heaven, to have said, ‘Behold, Lord, how great mischief Penda does!’—which words were hardly uttered, when the wind immediately turning from the city, drove back the flames upon those who had kindled them, so that some being hurt, and all frightened, they forbore any further attempts against the city, which they perceived was protected by the hand of God.”

Bishop Lightfoot writes¹:—“I know no nobler type of the missionary spirit than Aidan. His character, as it appears through the haze of antiquity, is almost absolutely faultless. Doubtless this haze may have obscured some

¹ *Leaders of the Northern Church*, p. 44.

imperfections which a clearer atmosphere and a nearer view would have enabled us to detect. But we cannot have been misled as to the main lineaments of the man. Measuring him side by side with other great missionaries of those days, Augustine of Canterbury, or Wilfrid of York, or Cuthbert of his own Lindisfarne, we are struck with the singular sweetness and breadth and sympathy of his character. He had all the virtues of his Celtic race, without any of its faults. A comparison with his own spiritual forefather—the eager, headstrong, irascible, affectionate, penitent, patriotic, self-devoted Columba, the most romantic and attractive of all early mediæval saints—will justify this sentiment. He was tender, sympathetic, adventurous, self-sacrificing, but he was patient, steadfast, calm, appreciative, discreet before all things. This grace of discretion, writes Bede, ‘marked him out for the Northumbrian mission; but when the time came he was found to be adorned with every other excellence.’ This ancient historian never tires of his theme, when he is praising Aidan.”

ST. HILDA.

I.

THE next of the glorious company who drew their inspiration and received their training from Iona, must naturally be the royal lady who founded the monastery of Streaneshalch,¹ on the cliffs which look across the Northern Sea.

We will begin with what Bede tells us about her, in his own words. "In the year of the Incarnation of our Lord 680, the most religious servant of Christ, Hilda, Abbess of the monastery that is called Streaneshalch, as above-mentioned, after having performed many heavenly works on earth, passed from thence to receive the rewards of the heavenly life, on November 17, at the age of sixty-six years; the first thirty-three of which she spent living most nobly in the secular habit; and more nobly dedicated the remaining half to our Lord in a monastic life. For she was nobly born, being the daughter of Hereric,

¹ Whitby.

nephew to King Edwin, with which king she also embraced the faith and mysteries of Christ, at the preaching of Paulinus, the first bishop of the Northumbrians of blessed memory, and preserved the same undefiled till she attained the sight of him in heaven.

“Resolving to quit the secular habit, and to serve Him alone, she withdrew into the province of the East Angles, for she was allied to the King; being desirous to pass over from England into France, to forsake her native country, and all she had, and so to live a stranger for our Lord in the monastery of Cale, that she might with more ease attain to the eternal kingdom in heaven; because her sister Heresuid, mother to Aldwulf, King of the East Angles, at that time living in the same monastery, under regular discipline, was waiting for her eternal reward. Being led by her example, she continued a whole year in the aforesaid province, with the design of going abroad; afterwards, Bishop Aidan being recalled home, he gave her the land of one family on the north side of the river Wear; where for a year she also led a monastic life, with very few companions.

“After this she was made Abbess in the

monastery called Heruteu,¹ which monastery had been founded, not long before, by the religious servant of Christ, Heiu, who is said to have been the first woman that in the province of the Northumbrians took upon her the habit and life of a nun, being consecrated by Bishop Aidan; but she, soon after she had founded that monastery, went away to the city of Calccestir, and there fixed her dwelling. Hilda, the servant of Christ, being set over that monastery, began immediately to reduce things to a regular system, according as she had been instructed by learned men; for Bishop Aidan and other religious men that knew her and loved her, frequently visited and diligently instructed her, because of her innate wisdom and inclination to the service of God. When she had for some years governed this monastery, wholly intent upon establishing a regular life, it happened that she also undertook either to build or to arrange a monastery under the same regular discipline as she had done the former; and taught there the strict observance of justice, piety, chastity, and other virtues, and particularly of peace and charity; so that, after the example of the primitive Church, no person

¹ Hartlepool.

there was rich, and none poor, all being in common to all, and none having any property. Her prudence was so great, that not only indifferent persons, but even kings and princes, as occasion offered, asked and received her advice; she obliged those who were under her direction to attend so much to reading of the Holy Scriptures, and to exercise themselves so much in works of justice, that many might be there found fit for ecclesiastical duties, and to serve at the altar.

“In short, we afterwards saw five bishops taken out of that monastery, and all of them men of merit and sanctity, whose names were Bosa, Hedda, Oftfor, John, and Wilfrid. We have above taken notice that the first of them was consecrated bishop at York; of the second it is to be observed he was appointed Bishop of Dorchester. Of the two last we shall speak hereafter, as they were consecrated—the first was Bishop of Hagulstad, the second of the Church of York; of the third we will here take notice that, having applied himself to the reading and observation of the Scriptures in both the monasteries of Hilda, at length being desirous to attain to greater perfection, he went into Kent, to Archbishop Theodore, of blessed memory; where having spent some

more time in sacred studies, he also resolved to go to Rome, which in those days was reckoned of great moment. Returning thence into Britain, he took his way into the province of the Wiccii, where King Osric then ruled, and continued there a long time, preaching the word of faith, and making himself an example of good life to all who saw and heard him. At the same time Bosel, the bishop of that province, laboured under such weakness of body, that he could not perform the episcopal functions; for which reason the Oftfor was, by universal consent, chosen bishop in his stead, and by order of King Ethelred, consecrated by Bishop Wilfrid, of blessed memory, who was then bishop of the Midland Angles, because Archbishop Theodore was dead, and no other bishop ordained in his place. Before the aforesaid man of God, Bosel, Tatfrid, a most learned and industrious man, and of excellent ability, had been chosen bishop there from the same Abbess's monastery, but had been snatched away by an untimely death, before he could be ordained.

“Thus this servant of Christ, Abbess Hilda, whom all that knew her called mother, for her singular piety and grace, was not only an example

of good life to those who lived in her monastery, but afforded occasion of amendment and salvation to many who lived at a distance, to whom the fame was brought of her industry and virtue ; for it was necessary that the dream which her mother Bregusuit had during her infancy should be fulfilled. At the time that her husband, Hereric, lived in banishment under Cerdic, King of the Britons, where he was also poisoned, she fancied in a dream that she was seeking for him most carefully, and could find no sign of him anywhere ; but after having used all her industry to seek him, she found a most precious jewel under her garment, which, whilst she was looking on it very attentively, cast such a light as spread itself throughout all Britain ; which dream was brought to pass in her daughter that we speak of, whose life was a bright example, not only to herself, but to all who desired to live well.”

II.

THE next extract brings St. Hilda before us in another character, as the discoverer of the poet Cædmon, and in this way the first pioneer and patron of English literature.

“There was in this Abbess’s monastery a certain brother, particularly remarkable for the grace of God, who was wont to make pious and religious verses, so that whatever was interpreted to him out of the Scriptures, he soon after put the same into poetical expressions of much sweetness and humility, in English, which was his native language. By his verses the minds of many were often excited to despise the world, and to aspire to heaven. Others after him attempted, in the English nation, to compose religious poems; but none could ever compare with him, for he did not learn the art of poetry from men, but from God, for which reason he never could compose any trivial or vain poem, but only those which relate to religion suited his religious tongue, for having lived in a secular habit till he was well advanced in years, he had never learned anything of versifying; for which reason, being sometimes at entertainments, where it was agreed for the sake of mirth that all present should sing in their turns, when he saw the instrument come towards him, he rose up from the table and returned home.

“Having done so at a certain time, and gone out of the house where the entertainment was,

to the stable, where he had to take care of the horses that night, he there composed himself to rest at the proper time; a person appeared to him in his sleep, and saluting him by his name, said, 'Cædmon, sing some song to me.' He answered, 'I cannot sing; for that was the reason why I left the entertainment and retired to this place because I could not sing.' The other who talked to him replied, 'However, you shall sing.' 'What shall I sing?' rejoined he. 'Sing the beginning of created beings,' said the other. Thereupon he presently began to sing verses to the praise of God, which he had never heard, the purport whereof was thus:—'We are now to praise the Maker of the heavenly kingdom, the power of the Creator and His counsel, the deeds of the Father of Glory. How He, being the Eternal God, became the author of all miracles, who first, as almighty preserver of the human race, created heaven for the sons of men as the roof of the house, and next the earth.' This is the sense, but not the words, in order as he sang them in his sleep: for verses, though never so well composed, cannot be literally translated out of one language into another, without losing much of their beauty and loftiness.

Awaking from his sleep, he remembered all that he had sung in his dream, and soon added much more to the same effect in verse worthy of the Deity.

“In the morning he came to the steward, his superior, and having acquainted him with the gift he had received, was conducted to the Abbess, by whom he was ordered, in the presence of many learned men, to tell his dream, and repeat the verses, that they might all give their judgment what it was, and whence his verse proceeded. They all concluded that heavenly grace had been conferred on him by our Lord. They expounded to him a passage in Holy Writ, either historical or doctrinal, ordering him, if he could, to put the same into verse. Having undertaken it he went away, and returning the next morning, gave it to them composed in most excellent verse; whereupon the Abbess, embracing the grace of God in the man, instructed him to quit the secular habit, and take upon him the monastic life; which being accordingly done, she associated him to the rest of the brethren in her monastery, and ordered that he should be taught the whole series of sacred history. Thus Cædmon, keeping in mind all he heard, and as it were

chewing the cud, converted the same into most harmonious verse, and sweetly repeating the same, made his masters in their turn his hearers. He sang the creation of the world, the origin of man, and all the history of Genesis; and made many verses on the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and their entering into the land of promise, with many other histories from Holy Writ, the incarnation, passion, resurrection of our Lord, and His ascension into heaven; the coming of the Holy Ghost, and the preaching of the Apostles; also the terror of future judgment, the horror of the pains of hell, and the delights of heaven; besides many more about the Divine benefits and judgments, by which he endeavoured to turn away all men from the love of vice, and to excite them in the love and application to good actions, for he was a very religious man, humbly submissive to regular discipline, but full of zeal against those who behaved themselves otherwise, for which reason he ended his life happily."

III.

THE SYNOD AT WHITBY.

THERE have been many great Queens and great Abbesses, and not a few as good as great. But seldom has a higher place been assigned to any woman than that of the Northumbrian Hilda, and never, it would seem, has a high place been more nobly filled. True woman, true English-woman, true Princess through all her monastic vocation and ecclesiastical rank. "Mother" was the name which lingered in her people's hearts when they thought of her. Unflinchingly true to her convictions, loyal to death to her early friends, open in heart and mind to every gift she could cultivate, to every need she could supply, she remains bound up for ever with Iona and its Celtic Saints, and yet presides like one of the old Teutonic Norns at the Fountain of Life for her own people, the fountain of English Literature and English Christianity.

The Synod of Whitby was convened in her great Abbey. Though her heart was with the defeated party, and her comfort and support always fervently and openly on their side, she

does not seem to have fallen into vain strife with the authority which prevailed.

Only, one likes to see, that Etheldreda when flying, by Wilfrid's secret sanction, from the husband who loved her with such chivalrous honour, did not seek her aunt Hilda's monastery, not apparently having confidence in her sympathy, devoted nun and generous Mother as she was. Indeed to Hilda monasticism meant primarily spiritual motherhood.

It was at her monastery at Whitby that in 654 the great Synod was held to settle the question of the time for celebrating Easter.

Twenty-seven years before, the Council of wise men had been summoned by King Edwin at York in heathen Northumbria to decide between Christianity and Paganism. The Italian Bishop Paulinus, with Queen Ethelberga from Christian Kent, Christianized through the Roman mission, had spoken there to the nobles before King Edwin. "Tall of stature, a little stooping, his hair black, his visage meagre, his nose slender and aquiline, his aspect both venerable and majestic." It was there that the nation decided for Christianity, and that the two grounds, high and low, for embracing the new religion were so

vividly stated by one of the King's chief men, and by Coifi the heathen priest.

Coifi, the chief of the priests, taking with brutal frankness the low ground, said, "Consider, O King, this new religion, for I verily declare the religion we have hitherto professed has no virtue in it. For none of your people has applied himself more diligently to the worship of our gods than I; and yet there are many others who receive greater favours from you, and are more preferred than I, and are more prosperous in all their undertakings. Now if the gods were good for anything, they would rather forward me who have been more careful to serve them."

The King's counsellor said: "The present life of man, O King, seems to me in comparison of that which is unknown to us, like to the swift flight of a sparrow through the room where you sit at supper in winter, with your commanders and ministers, and a good fire in the midst, whilst the storms of rain and snow bewail abroad; the sparrow, I say, flying in at one door, and immediately out at another, whilst he is within is safe from the wintry storm, but after a brief space of fair weather he immediately vanishes out of your sight, into the dark winter

from which he had emerged. So this life of man appears for a short space; but of what went before, or of what is to follow, we are utterly ignorant. If therefore this new doctrine contains something more certain, it seems justly to deserve to be followed."

So, from Socrates, in the *Phædo*, after the poison cup, to this fellow-countryman of our own, have the true hearts yearned for the "raft" —the launch into the immortal life.

Then Coifi rose a little to the higher level, and said the truth of the new preaching could evidently confer the gifts of life and salvation and eternal happiness; and, as the pagan high priest, he proposed, himself, to profane the temple, himself cast the challenging spears, and commanded his companions to burn the idols and the temple with fire.

And so, very rapidly, king, nobles, and common people received Christianity; and also very rapidly, on the same lower ground, abandoned it again, when eight years afterwards King Edwin was defeated and slain by the heathen Penda at the battle of Heathfield.

Some, no doubt, who had believed on the higher ground, preserved their faith. But the

Italian bishop and the Christian queen fled to Kent, and we know how two years afterwards King Oswald sent for Aidan from Iona, and the conversion of Northumbria had to be begun again. For more than twenty years the work of Aidan and the Iona missionaries had gone steadily on, and Northumbria was Christian.

But Aidan was dead, and Oswald was dead, and another king had arisen, not like Oswald or the gentle Oswin whom he had "cruelly murdered," but all the more perhaps zealous for orthodoxy, and anxious not to add a mistake to a crime. The question now to be decided was not whether Christ was the Redeemer, and was risen from the dead, but whether His Resurrection should be commemorated at one time of the year or another; whether the Celtic monks, to whom Northumbria owed her Christianity, who kept to one tradition, or Rome and the rest of Christendom, who held to the other, should be followed. They began the proceedings by observing that it behoved those who served God to observe the same rule of life; to inquire which was the truest tradition.

Bishop Wilfrid, the advocate for Rome, succeeded in narrowing the question to the relative

authority of St. Peter and St. Columba. "True, St. Columba," he said, "may be a holy man, and powerful in miracles, yet would he be preferred before the most blessed prince of the Apostles, to whom our Lord said, 'Thou art Peter, and to thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven'?"

Then the King said, "Is it true, Wilfrid, that these words were spoken to Peter by our Lord?" He answered, "It is true, O King." Then said he, "Can you show any such power given to your Columba?" Bishop Colman, Aidan's successor, answered, "None." Then added the King, "Do you both agree that these words were principally directed to Peter, 'that the keys of heaven were given him by our Lord'?" They both answered, "We do."

Then the King concluded, "And I also say unto you that he is the door-keeper whom I will not contradict, but will, as far as I know and am able in all things, obey his decrees, lest when I come to the gates of the kingdom of heaven, there should be none to open them, he being my adversary who is proved to have the keys."

There is certainly no satire intended by the gentle and Venerable Bede, but it sounds rather

like an echo of the old reason of Coifi the pagan high priest, worldliness merely transformed into "other worldliness." The disputation being ended and the victory won, the company broke up. But the Abbess Hilda remained faithful to the saintly Aidan and the holy teachers and monks of Iona and Lindisfarne.

IV.

"WHEN she had governed this monastery many years, it pleased Him who has made such merciful provision for our salvation to give her holy soul the trial of a long sickness, to the end that, according to the Apostle's example, her virtue might be perfected in infirmity. Falling into a fever, she fell into a violent heat, and was afflicted with the same for six years continually; during all which time, she never failed either to return thanks to her Maker, or publicly and privately to instruct the flock committed to her charge; for by her own example she admonished all persons to serve God dutifully in perfect health, and always to return thanks to Him in adversity, or bodily infirmity. In the seventh

year of her sickness, the distemper turning inwards, she approached her last day, and about cock-crowing, having received the holy communion to further her on her way, and called together the servants of Christ that were within the same monastery, she admonished them to preserve evangelical peace among themselves and with all others; and as she was making her speech, she joyfully saw death approaching, or, if I may speak in the words of our Lord, passed from death to life.

“That same night it pleased Almighty God, by a manifest vision, to make known her death in another monastery at a distance from her, which she had built that same year, which is called Hackness. There was in that monastery a certain nun called Begu, who, having dedicated her virginity to God, had served Him upwards of thirty years in monastical conversation. This nun being then in the dormitory of the sisters, on a sudden heard the well-known sound of a bell in the air, which used to awake and call them to prayers, when any one of them was taken out of this world; and opening her eyes, as she thought, she saw the top of the house open, and a strong light pour in from above;

looking earnestly upon that light, she saw the soul of the aforesaid servant of God in that same light, attended and conducted to heaven by angels. Then awaking and seeing the other sisters lying round about her, she perceived that what she had seen was either in a dream or a vision; and rising immediately in a great fright, she ran to the virgin who then presided in the monastery instead of the Abbess, and whose name was Frigyth, and with many tears and sighs, told her that Abbess Hilda, the mother of them all, had departed this life, and had in her sight ascended to eternal bliss, and to the company of the inhabitants of heaven, with a great light and with angels conducting her. Frigyth having heard it, awoke all the sisters, and calling them to the church, admonished them to pray and sing psalms for her soul; which they did during the remainder of the night; and at break of day the brothers came with news of her death, from the place where she had died. They answered that they knew it before, and then related how and when they had heard it, by which it appeared that her death had been revealed to them in a vision the very same hour that the others said she had died. Thus it was by Heaven happily

ordained that when some saw her departure out of this world, the others should be acquainted with her admittance into the spiritual life which is eternal. These monasteries are about thirteen miles distant from each other.

“It is also reported that her death was, in a vision, made known the same night to one of the holy virgins who loved her most passionately, in the same monastery where the said servant of God died. This nun saw her soul ascend to heaven in the company of angels; and this she declared the very same hour that it happened, to those servants of Christ who were with her, and awakened them to pray for her soul, even before the rest of the congregation had heard of her death. The truth of which was known to the whole monastery in the morning. This same nun was at that time with some other servants of Christ, in the remotest part of the monastery, where the women newly converted were wont to be upon trial, till they were regularly instructed and taken into the society of the congregation.”

ST. COLMAN.

WE come to the close of the great Celtic Mission in Northumbria, with Colman.

Thirty years before, at the saintly King Oswald's request, Aidan had been sent from Iona. And now, after the Synod at Whitby, the order and rites of Iona are set aside for those of Rome and the rest of Western Christendom.

Of St. Colman we know little but his defeat at Whitby, and his consequent departure from Lindisfarne, and the testimony Bede gives to his life and character.

There were forty Irish saints of the name of Colman, which is said to be a diminutive of Columba.

It seems best to give Bede's account in his own words:—"The disputation being ended, and the company broken up, Agilbert returned home. Colman, perceiving that his doctrine was rejected and his sect despised, took with him such as would not comply with the Catholic Easter and

the tonsure (for there was much controversy about that also), and went into Scotland, to consult what was to be done in this case. Cedd, forsaking the practices of the Scots, returned to his bishopric, having submitted to the Catholic observance of Easter. This disputation happened in the year of our Lord's Incarnation, 664, which was the twenty-second year of the reign of King Oswy, and the thirtieth of the episcopacy of the Scots among the English, for Aidan was bishop seventeen years, Finan ten, and Colman three.

“When Colman had gone back to his own country, God's servant, Tuda, was made bishop of the Northumbrians in his place, having been instructed and ordained bishop among the Southern Scots, having also the ecclesiastical tonsure of his crown, according to the custom of that province, and observing the Catholic time of Easter. He was a good and religious man, but governed his church a very short time; he came out of Scotland whilst Colman was yet bishop, and, both by word and example, diligently taught all persons those things that appertain to the faith and truth. But Eata, who was Abbot of the Monastery of Melrose, a most reverend and meek man, was appointed Abbot over the brethren

that stayed in the church of Lindisfarne, when the Scots went away; they say, Colman, upon his departure, requested and obtained this of King Oswy, because Eata was one of Aidan's twelve boys of the English nation, whom he received when first made bishop there, to be instructed in Christ; for the King much loved Bishop Colman on account of his singular discretion. This is the same Eata, who not long after was made bishop of the same church of Lindisfarne. Colman carried home with him part of the bones of the most reverend Father Aidan, and left part of them in the church where he had presided, ordering them to be interred in the sacristy.

“The place which he governed shows how frugal he and his predecessors were, for there were very few houses besides the church found at their departure; indeed, no more than were barely sufficient for their daily residence; they also had no money, but cattle; for if they received any money from rich persons, they immediately gave it to the poor; there being no need to gather money or provide houses for the great men of the world; for such never resorted to the church, except to pray and hear the Word of God. The

King himself, when opportunity offered, came only with five or six servants, and having performed his devotions in the church, departed. But if they happened to take a repast there, they were satisfied with only the plain and daily food of the brethren, and required no more; for the whole care of those teachers was to serve God, not the world,—to feed the soul and not the belly.

“For this reason, the religious habit was at that time in great veneration; so that wheresoever any clergyman or monk happened to come, he was joyfully received by all persons, as God’s servant, and if they chanced to meet him upon the way, they ran to him, and bowing, were glad to be signed with his hand, or blessed with his mouth. Great attention was also paid to their exhortations; and on Sunday they flocked eagerly to the church, or the monasteries, not to feed their bodies, but to hear the Word of God; and if any priest happened to come into a village, the inhabitants flocked together to hear from him the Word of life; for the priests and clergyman went into the village on no other account but to preach, baptize, visit the sick, and, in a few words, to take care of souls: and they were so freed from

worldly avarice, that none of them received lands and possessions for building monasteries, unless they were compelled to do so by the temporal authorities, which custom was for some time after observed in all churches of the Northumbrians. But enough has now been said on this subject.”

There is surely an accent of tender regret in those words of Bede. His ecclesiastical convictions were with the victors in the Easter controversy, but his spiritual sympathies seem to have been, in spite of himself, with the vanquished.

Of the two leaders at Whitby, Wilfrid and Colman seem to have been very unequal in force of intellect and personal insight. Of Wilfrid, Montalembert writes:—“With him we find no longer anything of the great monks of the primitive Church, the solitaires of the Thebaid, nor even of the solemn and mystical ascetics of Celtic Christianity. Although he may have known the aspirations and consolations of the spiritual life, what predominates with him is not the spiritual life (*l'homme intérieur*), the man of prayer and solitude; it is the man of noise and conflict, the man of war in the religious life.”

There must have been a wonderful charm

about him. He was of noble birth, is said to have been of noble bearing; fair of face, frank in speech; he won the hearts of young and old, men and women, high and low, from the son of the King of Northumbria to the royal Abbesses, Etheldrid and Ebba, and the aged Bishop of Lyons. "Eloquent," Montalembert says, "beyond any Englishman of his time, zealous for literature and public education, delighting and understanding how to construct great edifices which dazzled the vast audiences his voice drew to them." "Of quick and penetrating intelligence, manly and resolute, ardent and enthusiastic, capable in turn of waiting and acting, inaccessible to discouragement and fear, born to dwell on the summits which attract the multitudes, and the lightning (*la foule et la foudre*), he presents to us the high qualities and the singularities of his people (with a certain unhappy irritability, and even a haughty and wounding violence in speech); obstinacy, courage, laborious and indefatigable energy, determination to struggle to the death for his honour and his rights. *Dieu et mon droit!*—this proud device of England is written on every page of the life of Wilfrid. He begins that great line of English Prelates, in turn apos-

tolie and political—St. Dunstan, St. Lanfranc, St. Anselm, St. Thomas Becket.” And yet Montalembert, rejoicing in what he accomplished, says—“It is incontestable that he received no support from the great and holy monks who were his contemporaries; not only the illustrious Abbess Hilda, protectress of the Celtic rite, but neither Benedict Biscop, as Roman in heart as himself, nor the pious, humble, and austere Cuthbert, whose saintliness shone in Wilfrid’s own country and diocese, and nourished for so many ages the popular devotion of northern England.”

Of Colman we know little. He retired defeated, and, it must have been, sad at heart, “with his despised sect,” from the land they and theirs had spent themselves for and won to Christianity. He simply went away, with sadness, but it seems no bitterness, in his heart. All the Celtic brothers went with him, and thirty of their English disciples. But he did not cease his fatherly care for those who remained behind. He used his influence with King Oswy to have Eata—one of the twelve English boys Aidan had gathered around him and taken about with him and instructed—appointed Abbot of Lindisfarne. And while he took the bones of Aidan with him into Scotland,

he yet left half of these precious relics on the island St. Aidan's presence and prayers had made "Holy Island" for ever, to be buried in the sacristy of the Abbey church.

He himself went first to the other sacred island, Iona, the fountain of all the Missions, and after staying there a year or two, returned to what is supposed to have been his own country, and founded a community on the Isle of Inis-bo-Finn, off County Mayo, not very far from the "Wood of Fochlut," to which "the Voice of the Irish," "the Cry of the children," had called St. Patrick two hundred years before.

His life, even there, does not seem to have been altogether tranquil. The Irish, Celtic, and English elements in his community do not seem to have quite coalesced; and he had at last to separate them, planting the English monks in a new monastery in Mayo, whilst he himself remained with his countrymen on the little island, which perhaps was dear to him as reminding him of his own Lindisfarne and Iona; and there he died on August 8, A.D. 676, twelve years after he had retired defeated and despised from the great Synod at the Abbess Hilda's, Whitby.

There is something wonderfully pathetic and

typical in this silent retreat of the imaginative, tender Celtic race before the "loud, strong, determined Englishman"; of the spiritual, self-denying, fervent Saints who had silently won the hearts of England for Christ, before the great, successful, and all-powerful statesman who entered on their labours. They left very few visible traces in buildings, architectural or political.

Their churches were chiefly of wood, roofed with reed, and their cells sometimes of wattle, or rough unhewn stones, like cattle-sheds, soon ruined by wind and weather. "There were very few houses besides the church found at their departure from Lindisfarne; indeed no more than were barely sufficient for their daily residence." "They were poor, and chose to remain poor. For if they received any money from the rich, they immediately gave it to the poor." Poor in luxury, yet rich in artistic beauty. The only relic left of this Holy Island of the Celts is a book, written with the clear, fine Irish penmanship, illuminated with the rich subdued colouring and exquisite interlacing tracery of the Irish manuscripts, bound with lavish ornament and engraven silver set with large and brilliant gems: the book called the *Gospels of Lindisfarne*. Most charac-

teristic and pathetic monument of the Celtic Mission. The Holy Islands of Iona and Lindisfarne were fountains, not constructions.

The monument of Lindisfarne is the Book of the Gospels, not a cathedral; the Gospels written and illuminated so as to be a fine work of art; the Gospels written and illuminated in the hearts of Christian men and women, from the Hebrides to Dorsetshire. The Holy Islands of Iona and Lindisfarne were fountains, and the living waters are known by the green places they make on earth, the fields they make fertile, the forests which spring in their track.

Colman and his brethren had no real reason for sadness. Probably they lived too much on the Gospels they transcribed for so many hearts, to be long troubled or afraid. They had unsealed a fountain of life for the world. And the races who seemed to supersede them, but really only succeeded them, and carried on their work, were the organizing races of the world, England and Rome, the builders of the aqueducts whose waters flow from other sources on the silent hills.

THE CELTIC MISSIONS THROUGHOUT ENGLAND.

Montalembert resumes the work of the Celtic Missionaries thus—"In resuming the history of the efforts made during the sixty years from the disembarkation of Augustin till the death of Penda (A.D. 597—665), to introduce Christianity into England, the results may be summed up thus: Of the eight kingdoms of the Anglo-Saxon confederation, Kent alone was exclusively conquered and kept by the Roman monks, whose first attempts with the East Saxons and Northumbrians ended in a check. In Wessex and in East Anglia, the Saxons of the West and the Angles of the East were converted by the joint action of the continental missionary and the Celtic monks. As to the two Northumbrian kingdoms, Essex and Mercia, in themselves alone including two-thirds of the territory occupied by the German conquerors, these four countries owed their conversion exclusively to the Celtic monks, who had not only rivalled in zeal the Roman monks, but, the first obstacles once surmounted, had shown much more perseverance, and obtained much greater success.

"All the kingdoms of the Heptarchy have thus

passed under our notice except that of Sussex or the Saxons of the South. This was the smallest of all, but one of the earliest founded, and the first German invaders of this southern coast of Great Britain were remarkable above all for their ferocity as well as for their invincible vigour. Although nearest to Kent, the companions of Augustin had left no trace of their passage, if indeed they ever tried to penetrate there. The Celtic monks, more enterprising or more persevering, had succeeded in throwing out and establishing an outpost even there. This was the little monastery of Bosham, protected on one side by the sea, on the other by forests, where vegetated six monks from the province nearest Northumbria, East Anglia, under the leadership of an Irishman, a compatriot and disciple of Fursey, whose strange visions were spoken of everywhere. They lived in humility and poverty, but none of the Saxons of that country would listen to them. This is the only example of such a check. And nevertheless, the men of Sussex, although the last of the Saxons to accept the gospel, also owed this blessing to a monk formed in the school of the Celtic Missionaries.”¹

¹ *Moines de l'Occident*, Tome iv.

This is Montalembert's summing up of the comparative results of the early missions to England from Rome and from Iona. And to this must be added the Celtic Missions to Cornwall, not from Iona, but direct from the fountain-head of the Iona life, from Ireland itself. In Cornwall to this day the Patron Saint of parish after parish has a Celtic, usually an Irish, name, and is connected with some tradition of a holy man or woman who came across the Irish Sea in a coracle, or if necessary on a mill-stone, or on the sea without further conveyance, to live and die, to bring Christianity to the heathen people on those wild coasts, St. Piran, St. Morwenna, St. Crantock. Their names are the names of the parishes they made Christian to this day.

Again, one or two pictures will bring the Celtic Missionaries, or Missionaries formed in the Celtic school, before us better than many generalities, and they may best be given in the words of Bede.

ST. CHAD.

“CHAD, being thus consecrated Bishop of Lichfield (by Archbishop Theodore, the Greek from Tarsus, who established schools for Greek in England), began immediately to devote himself to ecclesiastical truth, and to chastity; to apply himself to humility, continence, and study; to travel about, not on horseback, but after the manner of the Apostles, on foot, to preach the Gospel in towns, the open country, cottages, villages, and castles; for he was one of the disciples of Aidan, and endeavoured to instruct his people by the same actions and behaviour, according to his and his brother Cedd’s example.

* * * * *

“At that time the Mercians were governed by King Wulfhere, who, on the death of Jaruman, desired of Theodore to supply him and his people with a bishop; but Theodore would not obtain a new one for them, but requested of King Oswy that Chad might be their bishop.

He then lived retired at his monastery, which is at Lestingau, Wilfred filling the bishopric of York, and of all the Northumbrians, and likewise of the Picts, as far as the dominions of King Oswy extended. And, seeing it was the custom of that most reverend prelate to go about the work of the Gospel to several places rather on foot than on horseback, Theodore commanded him to ride whenever he had a long journey to undertake; and finding him very unwilling to omit his former pious labour, he himself with his hands lifted him on the horse; for he thought him a holy man, and therefore obliged him to ride whenever he had need to go. Chad, having received the bishopric of the Mercians and Lindisfarne, took care to administer the same with great rectitude of life, according to the example of the ancients. King Wulfhere also gave him land of fifty families, to build a monastery, at the place called Ad Barve, or 'At the Wood,' in the province of Lindsey, wherein marks of the regular life instituted by him continue to this day.

“He had his episcopal see in the place called Lichfield, in which he also died, and was buried, and where the see of the succeeding bishops of

that province still continues. He had built himself a habitation not far from the church, wherein he was wont to pray and read with seven or eight of the brethren, as often as he had any spare time from the labour and ministry of the Word. When he had most gloriously governed the Church in that province for two years and a half, the Divine Providence so ordaining, there came round a season like that of which Ecclesiastes says, 'That there is a time to cast stones, and a time to gather them'; for there happened a mortality sent from heaven, which by means of the death of the flesh, translated the stones of the Church from their earthly places to the heavenly building. And when after many of the Church of that most reverend prelate had been taken out of the flesh, his hour also drew near, wherein he was to pass out of this world to our Lord, it happened one day, that he was in the aforesaid dwelling with only one brother, called Owini, his other companions being upon some reasonable occasion returned to the church. Now Owini was a monk of great merit, having forsaken the world with the pure intention of obtaining the heavenly reward; worthy in all respects to have the secrets of the Lord revealed

to him, and worthy to have credit given him by his hearers to what he said, for he came with Queen Etheldrid from the province of the East Angles, and was her prime minister, and governor of her family. As the fervour of his faith increased, resolving to renounce the world, he did not go about it slothfully, but so fully forsook the things of this world, that quitting all he had, clad in a plain garment, and carrying an axe and hatchet in his hand, he came to the monastery of that most reverend prelate, called Lestingau; denoting that he did not go to the monastery to live idle, as some do, but labour, which he also confirmed by practice, for as he was less capable of meditating on the Holy Scriptures, he the more earnestly applied himself to the labour of his hand. In short, he was received by the bishop into the house aforesaid, and there entertained with the brethren, and whilst they were engaged within in reading, he was without doing such things as were necessary.

“One day when he was thus employed abroad, and his companions were gone to the church, as I began to state, the bishop was alone, reading or praying in the oratory of that place, when on a sudden, as he afterwards said, he heard the

voices of persons singing most sweetly and rejoicing, and appearing to descend from heaven, which voice he said he first heard coming from the south-east, and that afterwards it drew near him, till it came to the roof of the oratory where the bishop was, and entering therein, filled the same and all about it. He listened attentively to what he heard, and after about half an hour, perceived the same song of joy to ascend from the roof of the said oratory, and to return to heaven the same way it came, with inexpressible sweetness. When he had stood for some time astonished, and seriously revolving in his mind what it might be, the bishop opened the window of the oratory, and making a noise with his hand, as he was often wont to do, ordered him to come in to him. He accordingly went hastily in, and the bishop said to him, ‘Make haste to the church and cause the seven brothers to come hither, and do you come with them.’ When they were come, he first admonished them to preserve the virtue of peace among themselves and towards all others; and indefatigably to practise the rules of regular discipline which they had either been taught by him, or seen him observe, or had noticed in the words or

actions of the former fathers. Then he added, that the day of his death was at hand ; for, said he, ‘that amiable guest, who was wont to visit our brethren, has vouchsafed also to come to me this day, and to call me out of this world. Return, therefore, to the church, and speak to the brethren, that they in their prayers recommend my passage to our Lord ; and they be careful to provide for their own, the hour whereof is uncertain, by watching, prayer, and good works.’

“When he had spoken thus much and more, and they, having received his blessing, had gone away in sorrow, he who had heard the heavenly song returned alone, and prostrating himself on the ground, said, ‘I beseech you, father, may I be permitted to ask you a question?’ ‘Ask what you will,’ answered the bishop. Then he added, ‘I entreat you to tell me what song of joy was that which I heard coming upon this oratory, and after some time returning to heaven?’ The bishop answered, ‘If you heard the singing, and know of the coming of the heavenly company, I command you, in the name of our Lord, that you do not tell the same to any before my death. They were angelic spirits who came to call me

to my heavenly reward, which I have always longed after; and they promised they would return seven days hence, and take me away with them.' Which was accordingly fulfilled, as had been said to him; for being presently seized with a languishing distemper, and the same daily increasing, on the seventh day, as had been promised to him, when he had prepared for death by receiving the Body and Blood of our Lord, his soul being delivered from the prison of the body, the angels, as may justly be believed, attending him, he departed to the joys of heaven.

“It is no wonder that he joyfully beheld the day of his death, or rather, the day of our Lord, which he had always carefully expected till it came; for notwithstanding his many merits of continence, humility, teaching, prayer, voluntary poverty, and other virtues, he was so full of the fear of God, so mindful of his last end in all his actions, that, as I was informed by one of the brothers who instructed me in Divinity, and who had been bred in his monastery and under his direction, whose name was Grumhere, if it happened that there blew a strong gust of wind when he was reading, or doing any other thing,

he immediately called upon God for mercy, and begged that it might be extended to all mankind. If the wind grew stronger, he closed his book, and prostrating himself on the ground, prayed still more earnestly. But if it proved a violent storm of wind or rain, or else that the earth and air were filled with thunder and lightning, he would repair to the church and devote himself to prayers and repeating of psalms till the weather became calm. Being asked by his followers why he did so, he answered, ‘Have you not read—“The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave forth His voice. Yea, He sent out His arrows and scattered them; and He shot out lightnings and discomfited them.” For the Lord moves the air, raises the winds, darts lightning and thunders from heaven, to excite the inhabitants of the earth to fear Him, and to put them in mind of the future judgment; to dispel their pride and vanquish their boldness by bringing into their thoughts that dreadful time, when the heavens and the earth being in a flame, He will come in the clouds, with great power and majesty, to judge the quick and the dead. Wherefore,’ said he, ‘it behoves us to answer His heavenly admon-

ition with due fear and love ; that, as often as He lifts His hand through the trembling sky, as it were to strike, but does not yet let it fall, we may immediately implore His mercy ; and searching the recesses of our hearts, and cleansing the filth of our vices, we may carefully behave ourselves so as never to be struck.’”

In East Anglia there was the imaginative Fursey, “of noble Scottish (*i. e.* Irish or Celtic) blood, but much more noble in mind than in birth ; learned in sacred books, and carefully practising how all that he learned was to be done ; who had those wonderful dreams or visions of the unseen world, which were among the material accumulating through the Middle Ages, to be fused by the genius of Dante into the great Poem of mediæval Christianity, the *Divina Commedia*.

“When he had been lifted up on high,” Bede writes, “he was ordered by the angels that conducted him, to look back upon the world. Upon which, casting his eyes downward, he saw as it were a dark and obscure valley underneath him. He also saw four fires in the air, not far distant from each other. Then, asking the

angels what fires these were, he was told they were the fires which would kindle and consume the world.

“One of them was of *falsehood*: when we do not fulfil that which we promised in baptism; to renounce the devil and all his works. The next of *covetousness*: when we prefer the riches of the world to the love of heavenly things. The third of *discord*: when we make no difficulty to offend the minds of our neighbours even in needless things. The fourth of *injustice*: when we look on it as no crime to rob and defraud the weak. These fires, increasing by degrees, extended so as to meet each other, and being joined, became an immense flame.

“When this flame drew near, fearing for himself, he said to the angel, ‘Lord, behold the fire draws near me.’ The angel answered, ‘*That which you did not kindle shall not burn you; for though this appears to be a terrible and great fire, yet it tries every man according to the merit of his works; for every man’s concupiscence shall burn in the fire; for as every one burns in the body through unlawful pleasure, so, when discharged from the body, he shall burn in the punishment which he has deserved.*’”

Seldom, surely, has there been a loftier and purer conception of what sin is, or of how sin itself is the fire which burns in punishment the soul that cleaves to it.

ST. CUTHBERT.

WITH one more of Bede's pictures of the Saints of the Celtic type, we may close these memorials of Iona.

“The same year that King Egfrid departed this life, he (as has been said) promoted to the bishopric of the Church of Lindisfarne, the holy and venerable Cuthbert, who had for many years led a solitary life, in great continence of body and mind, in a very small island called Farne, distant about nine miles from that same church, in the ocean. From his very childhood he had always been inflamed with the desire of a religious life, but he took upon him the habit and name of a monk when he was a young man. He first entered into the monastery of Melrose, which is on the bank of the river Tweed, and was there governed by the Abbot Eata, a meek and simple man, who was afterwards made bishop of the Church of Hagulstad, or Lindisfarne, as has been said above, over which monastery at that time

was placed Boisit, a priest of great virtue and of a prophetic spirit. Cuthbert humbly submitting himself to this man's direction, from him received both the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and the example of good works.

“After he had departed to our Lord, Cuthbert was placed over that monastery, where he instructed many in regular life, both by the authority of a master, and the example of his own behaviour. Nor did he afford admonitions and an example of a regular life to his monastery alone, but endeavoured to convert the people round about, far and near, from the life of foolish custom to the life of heavenly joys; for many profaned the faith they had received by wicked actions; and some also neglecting the sacraments of faith which they had received, had recourse to the false remedies of idolatry.

“In order to correct the error of both sorts, he often went out of the monastery (of Melrose), sometimes on horseback, but oftener on foot, and repaired to the neighbouring towns, where he preached the way of truth to such as were gone astray. It was then the custom of the English people that when a clerk, or priest, came into the town, they all, at his command, flocked together

to hear the Word ; willingly heard what was said, and more willingly practised those things that they could hear or understand. But Cuthbert was so skilful an orator, so fond was he of enforcing his subject, and such a brightness appeared in his angelic face, that no man presumed to conceal from him the most hidden secrets of his heart, but all openly confessed what they had done ; because they thought the same guilt could not be concealed from him, and wiped off the guilt of what they had so confessed with worthy fruits of penance, as he commanded.

“He was wont chiefly to resort to those places, and preach in such villages, as being seated up high among uncouth, craggy mountains, were frightful to others to behold, and whose poverty and barbarity rendered them inaccessible to other teachers ; which nevertheless he, having entirely devoted himself to that pious labour, did so industriously apply himself to polish with his doctrine, that when he departed out of his monastery, he would often stay a week, sometimes two or three, and sometimes a whole month, before he returned home, continuing among the mountains to allure that rustic people by his preaching and example to heavenly employments.

“This venerable servant of our Lord, having thus spent many years in the monastery of Melrose (‘old Melrose’), and there become conspicuous by many miracles, his most reverend Abbot, Eata, removed him to the isle of Lindisfarne, that he might there also, by the authority of a superior and his own example, instruct the brethren in the observance of regular discipline.”

After this, Cuthbert, possessed with that intense sense of the need of the solitude with God which seems to have steeped the hearts of these Saints in such tender love for all mankind, proceeded to the adoption of a hermit’s life of solitude in a cell on a mountain, with a mound round it, so that he could only see the sky, “the heavens to which he aspired.” “When,” says Bede, “he had served God in solitude many years, Cuthbert was by the unanimous decree of all chosen bishop of Lindisfarne. They could not, however, persuade him to leave his monastery; they all knelt (the King himself, with the most holy Bishop Trumwine, and other great men), and conjured him by our Lord, and with tears and entreaties, till they drew him, also in tears, from his retreat and forced him to the synod. Being arrived there, after much opposition he was overcome by the

unanimous resolution of all present, and submitted to take on himself the episcopal dignity.

“Following the example of the Apostles, he became an ornament to the episcopal dignity by his virtuous actions; for he both protected the people committed to his charge by constant prayer, and excited them by most wholesome admonitions to heavenly practices; and, which is the greatest help in teachers, he first showed in his behaviour what he taught was to be performed by others; for he was much inflamed with the fire of Divine charity, modest in the virtue of patience, most diligently intent on devout prayers, and affable to all that came to him for comfort.

“He thought it equivalent to praying to afford the infirm brethren the help of his exhortations, well knowing that He who said, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,’ said likewise, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’ He was also remarkable for penitential abstinence, and always intent on heavenly things through the grace of humility. Lastly, when he offered up to God the Sacrifice of the Saving Victim, he commended his prayer to God, not with a loud voice, but with tears drawn from the bottom of his heart.

“Having spent two years in his bishopric, he returned to his island and monastery, being advised by a Divine oracle that the day of his death, or rather of his life, was drawing near; as he at that time, with his usual simplicity, signified to some persons, though in terms which were somewhat obscure, but which were nevertheless afterwards plainly understood; while to others he declared the same openly.”

Like St. Patrick with the roe and the fawn, and St. Columba with the crane (or heron), he loved the dumb animals. His beloved sea-fowl, called St. Cuthbert's ducks after him, which lived only in his islands, Lindisfarne and Farne, were found embroidered on the episcopal robes which were his shroud. The others also are said to have loved him and gathered round him; and “there is a pleasant story told, how on one occasion, being hungry and having no food at hand, he descried an eagle, and bade his companion follow it. The attendant returning with a large fish which the eagle had caught in a river, received a rebuke from the Saint, who bade him cut the fish in two, and take half back, that God's kindly messenger, the eagle, might not be without a dinner.”¹

¹ Bishop Lightfoot, *Leaders of the Northern Church*.

There is also a beautiful story of the friendship between St. Cuthbert and a hermit who lived on another island, a little wooded islet, in the middle of the lake of Derwentwater, the two friends dying at the same hour, being "taken as a single soul" to God.

"There was a certain priest, venerable for the probity of his life and manners, called Herebert, who had long been united with the man of God, Cuthbert, in the bonds of spiritual friendship. This man, leading a solitary life in the island of the great lake from which the river Derwent flows, was wont to visit him every year, and to receive from him spiritual counsel.

"Hearing that Bishop Cuthbert was come to the city of Lugubalia (Old Penryth, in Cumberland), he repaired thither to him, according to custom, being desirous to be more and more inflamed in heavenly desires through his wholesome admonitions.

"Whilst they alternately entertained one another with the delights of the celestial life, the bishop, among other things, said, 'Brother Herebert, remember at this time to ask me all the questions you wish to have resolved, and say all you design; for we shall see each other no more in this

world. For I am sure that the time of my dissolution is at hand, and I shall speedily put off this tabernacle of the flesh.'

"Hearing these words, Herebert fell down at his feet, and shedding tears, said with a sigh, 'I beseech you by our Lord, not to forsake me; but that you remember your most faithful companion, and entreat the Supreme Goodness that, as we served Him together on earth, we may depart together to see His bliss in heaven. For you know that I have always endeavoured to live according to your directions, and whatsoever faults I have committed, whether through ignorance or frailty, I have instantly submitted to correction according to your will.'

"The bishop applied himself to prayer, and having presently had intimation in the spirit that he had obtained what he had asked of the Lord, he said, 'Rise, brother, and do not weep, but rejoice, because the Heavenly Goodness has granted what we desired.'

"The event proved the truth of this promise and prophecy, for after their parting at that time, they no more saw each other in the flesh, but their souls quitting their bodies on the very same day, that is the 20th of March, they were imme-

diately again united in spirit, and translated to the heavenly kingdom by the ministry of angels. But Herebert was first prepared by a tedious sickness through the dispensation of the Divine Goodness, as may be believed, to the end that if he was anything inferior in merit to the blessed Cuthbert, the same might be made up by the chastening pain of a long sickness, that being thus made equal in grace to his intercessor, as he departed out of the body at the very same time with him, so he might be received into the same seat of eternal bliss."

And so the two friends died, on their two islands; one celebrated throughout the English world for centuries; the other only known through this one sacred link of love and prayer, but both, it was believed, through the same inward grace of the Heavenly Goodness received into the same joy in the heavenly kingdom, for ever.

It has doubtless been a gain that in the Christianizing of England, as in so many things, there has been more than one current of influence. Far be it from any of us to minimize or detract from the debt of gratitude we owe to Gregory the Great. We can none of us forget

the story which pleased our childhood of his affectionate puns with the fair English boys in the Roman slave-market. The "Who are those children?" "They are Angles." "Not Angles, but Angels. Whence do they come?" "From the province of Deira." "*De irá* shall they be delivered. What is your name?" "Ella." "The Alleluias shall soon resound from your land."

Nor would we be ungrateful to the forty monks who came, though with some reluctance and terror, to save us, having heard what dreadful savages we were. It is no small honour for the English Church to be linked at the beginning with the great and good man who with all his tolerance would not tolerate persecution and slavery; who insisted on equal justice being done to the Jews; who wrote to St. Augustine not to glory much in miracles, because "The proof of holiness is not working miracles, but loving all as we love ourselves." Reviser of the Liturgy, Reformer of Church music, Protector of Italy from the Lombards, this England of ours which has made it an act of emancipation for any slave to tread her soil, is bound to him with an imperishable bond by the preamble of the Act with which he emancipated his two slaves.

“Since the Redeemer and Creator of the world,” he declares, “has willed to incarnate Himself in humanity, to break by the gift of freedom the chain of our bondage, it is to act well and fairly to restore their original freedom to men whom nature made free, but whom the law of nations has bound under the yoke of slavery.”

Certainly England would not repudiate her debt to St. Gregory of Rome. But still less would she ungenerously ignore what she owes to Ireland—to the generous Celtic race, the fervent and humble Saints from Iona and Ireland, who with all the enthusiasm of their ardent hearts and vivid imagination, spent themselves with unwearied patience and boundless self-denial and unquenchable love in pouring forth the blessings of Christianity through every nook and corner of our land,

MISSIONS
OF
IRELAND AND ENGLAND
IN EUROPE.

ST. COLUMBAN,

ABBOT OF LUXEUIL AND BOBBIO.

I.

WE come to a new phase in the life of the Irish Church.

The busy, crowded monasteries swarmed like bees in a bee-hive, and were continually forming new colonies.

The more we look into the history of the centuries after St. Patrick—the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries—the more we are struck with the wonderful force of the Irish monasteries, centripetal and centrifugal; gathering from all Europe men who sought inspiration for a holy life, and at the same time the best learning of the day—sacred and secular; and then sending them forth with the Missionary inspiration. Again and again, if any one especially good or learned is mentioned, *e. g.* Agilbert¹ (Bishop of the ancient

¹ St. Bede in many places.

Dorchester near Oxford): Egbert, who, in the seventh century, longed to sail round England to preach the Word of God to some of those nations who had not heard of it, "the Frisons, the Danes, the Huns, the ancient Saxons": Willibrord, who accomplished at the close of the century what Egbert had wished to do, and became the Apostle of the Frisians: it is to Ireland they go "to study and to be well instructed"; it is to Ireland they retire "either for the sake of Divine studies or to lead a pure life"; it is in Ireland they abide "even as strangers, there to obtain hereafter a residence in heaven"; and having been trained in the monastic discipline, and filled their minds with the learning, Latin and Greek, sacred and ancient classical, stored up in the libraries, and taught by the great teachers there, and having enkindled their hearts into a glow of love to God and man at the hearts of the great Saints there, the Divine impulse seems to have sent them forth to spread Christianity and civilization through Europe.

In order to realize the wonderful exuberance of spiritual and intellectual life in Ireland at that age, we must take a survey of the numbers, the multitudes, of those who went thither to learn,

from England, and France, and all Europe, and came forth thence to teach in Scotland and England, as we have seen; and also in France, Holland, Switzerland, and Italy. But to form any clear picture of what the men were, what they brought to the lands which were the scenes of their Missions, it is best to follow as far as we can the life of one or two of the greatest Missionaries.

The most characteristic life to take seems to be that of Columban, with all its storms and conflicts, and its outpourings of blessings on land after land. In him we see combined many of the most characteristic features of the Celtic type of nature and of saintliness, an Irishman of the Irish like St. Columba. He had an imaginative and devotional delight in solitude: he had not, apparently, any rooted dislike to combat—at least, he was generally in some kind of warfare, usually a true crusade against vice and oppression; but he fought as if he enjoyed it; he had a keen, bright intellect, well stored with all the learning of his age, so that the Abbey of Luxeuil which he founded became not only “a nursery of bishops and abbots, preachers and reformers,” but “the most famous and the most frequented

school in Christendom”¹; and his heart was ardently affectionate and loyal, winning and keeping the devoted affection of his monks and pupils.

The first conflict of Columban seems to have been with his own passionate nature. Quick-witted and sympathetic, with noble personal appearance and great personal charm, his attractions endangered the hearts of others in his native Leinster, and apparently also his own. The one type of the higher life, then, seemed to be the monastic; to renounce home, with its cares, joys, and duties, for the life apart from all, and devoted to all in God. He consulted a recluse, a nun, or maiden-hermit, how best to escape these perils. She counselled him to abandon his native place, and to save himself for the true life, by flight. He listened to her as a prophetess, counting the entreaties of his own mother as among the temptations from the higher path to be resisted, and left his home for ever. The sacrifices of the mothers left, like Columban's, “entreating on the threshold,” will, it is to be hoped, also count. No doubt, in time, being a true mother, and loving best what was best for

¹ Montalembert, *Moines de l'Occident*.

him, she became content, and followed his career with joy and pride.

In all ages and in all lives worth living, the mothers of a country who sends her soldiers and sailors, her rulers and reformers, and her Christian missionaries to all regions of the earth, must often have to weep their tears of parting on the threshold. No earthly home ruled by high human laws (to say nothing of being inspired by the Christian law of sacrifice) can retain all its daughters or its sons. Only, sometimes one longs to hear a little more of those who stay in the empty home and sacrifice its joys, as well as of those who sacrifice the home, and go. St. Columban's mother stayed in the desolate home. St. Columban went to Bangor among the full tide of young and vigorous life, the active community of three thousand, eager to learn, or able to teach, where travellers were always returning with news and fresh life from many lands, and Missionaries always going to every land.

St. Columban remained at Bangor long enough to acquaint himself with the learning needed to found his great Abbey.

The good Abbot, like his mother, would have liked to retain him. But it could have been no

new thing to the leader and inspirer of thousands of eager students and monks—Irish, and of the choicest and most ardent of other races—to find the fervour which had attracted them to Bangor, and there enkindled their hearts and minds, impelling them forth from Bangor, to carry its light and heat elsewhere. For Columban, the hardest threshold to cross had been left behind in Leinster.

For ever in his heart were sounding the words of the old Divine call, “*Go forth from thy country, and thy father’s house, to the land that I shall shew thee.*”

His scholar and biographer, Jonas, a monk and disciple of his, in his Monastery of Bobbio, expresses this thus:—“He began to long for a pilgrim life, mindful of the command of the Lord, ‘Depart from thy country, and thy kindred, and thy father’s house, and go to the land that I shall shew thee!’ God bestowed on Father Columban that fervour of heart, that longing enkindled by the fire of the Lord, of which He saith, ‘I am come to enkindle a fire upon earth.’ Columban himself says of this holy fire of love: ‘O that God—since petty as I am, I am His servant—O that God would so arouse me out of

the sleep of sloth, that He would deign so to enkindle in me the fire of Divine love, that this Divine flame may constantly burn in me! O that I had the fuel with which perpetually to feed that fire, that it might never more be extinguished, but might constantly increase in me! O Lord, give me, I beseech Thee, in the name of Jesus Christ Thy Son, my God, that love which can never cease; that my lamp may be kindled, and may not be extinguished; that it may burn in me, and shine to others! And Thou, Christ, our dearest Saviour, do Thou Thyself kindle our lamps, that they may shine evermore in Thy temple, that they may receive inextinguishable light from Thee, the inextinguishable light, that our darkness may be enlightened, whilst the darkness of the world flies from us. My Jesus, I beseech Thee, give Thy light to my lamp, that in its light may be manifested to me, that Holy of Holies, in which Thou, the eternal Priest, dost dwell, that I may continually contemplate Thee only, long for Thee, gaze on Thee, and yearn for Thee in love. Let it be Thy concern, O Saviour full of love, to shew Thyself to us who knock, that we may perceive Thee, love Thee alone, only think of Thee day and night, that

Thy love may possess our whole souls, and this so great love may never more be extinguished by the many waters of this earth, as it is written, that many waters cannot quench love.' ”

And so Columban and his twelve companions left Bangor for Gaul to repay the gift the Gallo-Roman Patrick had brought two hundred years before to Ireland. But neither Columban nor the Abbot Comgall knew what forces were gathering against them and the Christian Church far away in the East beyond all the lands and seas they knew.

In a little pagan city beyond Syria, beyond the deserts of Arabia, a life had begun, a personality was being developed, which was to crush the ancient Christianity of the East, and to imperil the Christianity of the West for centuries to come; whilst, in the far West—on the wild coasts of Ireland—arms and armies had been preparing which were to save Europe; and now they were called forth to the unknown battle with a foe from a quarter where no one had ever dreamt of any danger.

In 570, while Columban was at Bangor, in training for the warfare with the heathen and lapsed Christians of Europe, Mohammed was born.

In 585, when he went forth from Bangor, Mohammed was growing up, an eccentric orphan boy, faithfully cared for by his uncle, perplexing his relations by his strange ways and epileptic fits and trances.

In 615, when Columban, after introducing Christianity among the heathen of Switzerland, and reviving it among the chilled or fallen Christians in Gaul and Italy, died Abbot of Bobbio on the Apennines, Mohammed had for five years believed himself the supreme Prophet of God, and was slowly gathering a few converts around him.

In 636, twenty-one years after the death of Columban, and twenty-four years after the death of Mohammed, Damascus and Jerusalem had fallen into the hands of the Mohammedan conquerors, and through all Christian Europe rang the fearful tidings that the Holy Sepulchre was in the hands of the infidels—altogether new and unforeseen infidels; that the most ancient churches of the world were falling before them like reeds before a whirlwind of the desert.

It was not till a century after, in 732, that at the Battle of Tours, in the France Columban had helped to restore and rekindle to the fervour of

the Christian faith, Charles Martel at last drove back the devastating tide of Moslem fanaticism and conquest. By a way he knew not, against forces he could not see, Columban was being led to marshal the forces of his King for a battle of which he could not dream. Moreover the time was short, the time for the peaceful shining of Christianity in those Irish monasteries of Ireland and of Iona.

Early in the ninth century the Danes began their ravages on Iona and its "Family," and burned the churches and massacred the Christian communities on all the coasts of Ireland; only two hundred years after St. Columba's death, and St. Columban's mission. It was well for the world that those two hundred years had been so nobly used.

II.

COLUMBAN and his twelve young monks and pupils, in training for orders, paid a visit to Britain on their way to France. They seem to have spent some years in a missionary journey through France, which from the successive ravages of the various barbaric tribes, and the

state of carelessness as to faith and morals into which the Christian clergy and people seem to have fallen, had well-nigh sunk anew into chaos, and needed to be civilized and converted once more. "He found indeed the Catholic faith still standing (say les Petits Bollandistes), but Christian virtue and ecclesiastical discipline outraged or unknown, thanks to the fury of wars and the negligence of the bishops." Columban and his twelve young Irish monks, carrying with them everywhere the light of their life of faith and self-denial, preached to the people, were followed and listened to. But they do not seem to have founded any settled community until they reached Burgundy, near the Vosges mountains. There they were warmly welcomed by Gontran, the most worthy of the grandsons of Clovis. It was a curious return of the wave, that the countrymen of Patrick the Gallo-Roman Apostle of Ireland, and the kinsman of Clotilda, the first Christian Queen of Kent, who had helped the mission of St. Augustine to her heathen husband, should be receiving the life of Christianity afresh from Christian Ireland.

Gontran entreated Columban and his Twelve to remain among them and teach his people, and

offered them any riches and gifts in his power to tempt them. The lands of the religious houses were often given to rich laymen, and they might have had luxurious and easy lives, but Columban did not want the gifts. He had not left home and country to seek riches elsewhere, he said, "but to follow Christ, and to bear His cross." The King replied that there were plenty of wildernesses in his country, where they might find the Cross and gain heaven. He could easily accommodate them with a desert. So at last they consented to settle in a wild place on the ruins of an old Roman castle at Annegray, among the Vosges mountains.

There they lived four years. At first they had many hardships to endure. They had to clear the land and plough and sow before they could have even bread to eat; and meantime they had sometimes to live and work, sustained by the bark of trees and herbs. Once this weighed especially on them, because one of their number was ill. They had been praying for three days that their sick brother might be relieved, when they saw a man, whose sacks were laden with provisions, stop before the gates of the monastery. He told them he had felt constrained by

a sudden impulse to assist according to his means those who from love to Christ suffered such need in the wilderness.¹

For it was indeed a wilderness, like France itself, the ruins of an ancient civilization, and overgrown and become a waste again. There were tangles of wild forest, and there were wild beasts, wolves and bears, prowling among the Roman ruins. The young Irish monks set to work at once, and began felling the trees, and digging, and ploughing in the clearings. They were re-conquering the land from Nature as really and with toil as severe, and amongst perils as great as any encountered by settlers in the wild West of America. The perils were greater in some ways—for the wild men around them were no mere uncivilized tribes of Indians with some rude civilization of their own; they were civilized men grown wild again through war and misery. There was especial hope however as well as especial danger in this.

When the Christian community set up their threefold work of worship and work and study, when the church-bell was heard once more resounding through the solitudes, its tones fell

¹ Neander's *Denkwürdigkeiten*.

doubtless on the ears of some who had heard them before, perhaps in days of Christian childhood, and woke chords which had been slumbering for years.

The early missionary work of Columban was among people who had once had civilization and Christianity. Nevertheless the solitude was wild enough to satisfy any romantic desire for "a desert," such as one of St. Columban's monks had vainly sailed forth to find in the Western Seas. From time to time Columban availed himself with delight of this, left his Twelve, and plunged deep into the absolute solitude of the forest, "with his Bible in the case of leather and metal used by the Irish monks, suspended from his shoulder." "There in the wild forest none of the wild creatures feared him, nor he them. The animal stories of the Celtic legends gather around him in those solitary retreats. It is said the birds flew down for his caresses; that the squirrels scrambled down from the pine-trees and hid in the folds of his cowl; that he drove one bear from his cave and made it his cell; that he took from another a dead stag whose skin made shoes for his monks. One day when he was reflecting whether the ferocity of the beasts who

do not sin was not better than the rage of men who lose their souls, he saw twelve wolves, who came and surrounded him on the right and left. He remained motionless, repeating the verse *Deus in adiutorium*. The wolves, after smelling his clothes, seeing him fearless, went on their way. He also went on his way; and in a few steps, he heard a great noise of human voices, that he recognized to be those of German brigands, of the nation of the Suevi, who were then ravaging the country. He did not see them, but he thanked God for thus saving him from this double danger.”

We are not left to conjecture what Columban's thoughts were in these solitudes; or what was the nourishment of his spiritual life. He has left us many books, his *Rule*, and *Instructions to his Monks*—Letters and Poems.¹ Some extracts from these writings of his own will best show what inspired him, and how he inspired others. In his *Instructions to his Monks* he writes—

“We must attain to the city of God in the right way, by mortification of the flesh, contrition of heart, bodily labour, and humiliation of spirit, by our own efforts (doing in this only

¹ *Les Petits Bollandistes*, Tom. 13^{ième}.

what it is our duty to do, not as if we could merit anything), and what is above all, by the grace of Christ, by faith and hope and love.”

In the *Monastic Rules* of Columban it is written:—“Let the monk live in the convent under the control of a father, and in fellowship with many, that from the one he may learn humility, from the others patience; from the one silent obedience, from the others gentleness; let him not do his own will, let him eat what is commanded him, let him take as much as he is given, let him accomplish his daily task. Let him retire weary to his bed, let him sleep slightly, and before he has slept out his sleep, let him be compelled to rise. Let him fear the superior of the convent as a master, and love him as a father.”¹

And again:—“He tramples on the world who overcomes himself; no one who spares himself can hate the world. In our own souls alone do we hate or love the world.” And in another *Instruction*:—

“We must willingly resign, for Christ’s sake, all that we love besides Christ. Firstly, if it is necessary, our natural life must be yielded up

¹ Neander’s *Denkwürdigkeiten*.

to the martyr's death for Christ. Or, if the opportunity of such blessedness fails, the crucifixion of the will must not be lacking, so that those who thus live, may no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them. Let us therefore live unto Him, who although He died for us, is our life; let us die to ourselves, in order to live unto Christ. For we cannot live unto Him, if we do not first die to ourselves, that is, to our own will. Let us be Christ's and not our own; for we are dearly bought—dearly bought indeed—for the Master gave Himself for the servant, the King for the subject, God for man. What shall we return for this, that the Creator of the universe has died for us sinners, for us His creatures? Dost thou not think that thou shouldest also die to sin? Surely thou shouldest. Let us therefore die; let us die for Him who is the Life, since the Life has died for us, that we may be able to say with Paul, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, who hath died for me'—this is the voice of God's people. No man can die to himself if God does not first live in him. Live in Christ, that Christ may live in thee. With violence must we now take the kingdom of heaven; for we are not only

opposed by our adversaries, but yet more fiercely by ourselves. It is a great misery when a man injures himself and does not feel it. If thou hast overcome thyself, thou hast overcome all."

And again :—" If the monks learn the lowliness of Christ, the yoke will become easy to them, and the burden light. Lowliness of heart is the rest of a soul wearied out by conflict with its corrupt inclinations, and by its inward sufferings ; this is its only refuge from such manifold evils, and the more it withdraws to this contemplation from restless distraction amongst vain and external things, the more it rests, and is inwardly refreshed, so that the bitter becomes sweet, and what was formerly too hard and difficult to be borne, becomes smooth and easy."

And again :—" Who can speak of the essence of God,—how He is everywhere present and invisible, or how He fills heaven and earth and all creatures, according to those words, ' Am I not He who filleth heaven and earth ? ' (Jer. xxii. 24). The universe is full of the Spirit of the Lord : ' Heaven is My throne, and earth My footstool.' Thus God is everywhere present in all His infinity ; everywhere He is quite near us, according to His own testimony concerning Himself.

‘Am I a God that is near, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off?’ We do not therefore seek God as One who is far off from us, since we can draw nigh to Him in our own souls; for He dwells in us as the soul in the body, if we are not dead in the service of sin. If we are fit to receive Him, then we are made truly living by Him, as His living members. ‘In Him,’ says the Apostle, ‘we live and move and have our being.’ Who can search out the Highest in this His unutterable and incomprehensible essence? Who can fathom the depths of the Godhead? Who can boast that he comprehends the Infinite God, who fills and embraces all things, who penetrates all things, and is sublime above all? For no man hath seen how He exists. Let no one then venture to search into the unsearchable essence of God; let us only believe simply, yet firmly, that God is, and will be that which He has been, because He is the unchangeable God. God is apprehended by the pious faith of a pure heart, but not by an impure heart and vain discourse. If thou wilt dare to search out the unutterable with thy prying subtleties, wisdom will remain further from thee than she was (Eccles. vii. 24); but if, on the other hand, thou

clingest to Him by faith, wisdom will stand at thy door. Therefore should we beseech the Omnipresent, Invisible God Himself, that the fear which is linked with faith and love may abide in us; for this fear of God, blended with love, makes us wise on all occasions, and piety teaches us to be silent about the unutterable!"

Of the happiness of him who has vital Christianity, he says: "Who indeed can be happier than the man whose death is life, whose life is Christ, whose reward is the Saviour, to whom the heavens bow down, to whom paradise is open, for whom hell is closed, whose father is God, whose servants are the angels?" In his eighth Instruction:—"It behoves pilgrims to hasten to their home. They have cares as long as they are on their pilgrimage, but in their fatherland they have rest. Let us, therefore, who are on our pilgrimage, hasten towards our fatherland, for our whole life is as a day's journey. The first thing for us is not to set our affections on things below, but on things above; to desire only, to meditate only on the things which are above; to seek our fatherland there only where our Father is. Here on earth, then, we have no fatherland, because our Father is in heaven."

Of love as the soul of the Christian life he says:—"What has the law of God prescribed more carefully, more frequently than love? And yet you seldom find any one who really loves. What have we to say in excuse? Can we say, it is something painful and hard? Love is no labour; it is, on the contrary, a sweet, and wholesome, and healing thing to the heart. Unless the soul is diseased within, its health is love. He who fulfilleth the law with the zeal of love hath eternal life. As John says, 'We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He who loveth not his brother, abideth in death. He who hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.' We must therefore do nothing but love, or we have nothing to expect but punishment. May our gracious Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, our God, the Creator of peace and love, inspire us with this love, which is the fulfilling of the law!"

III.

“AT the end of several years,¹ the increasing number of his disciples obliged him to move elsewhere, and by the protection of one of the chief Ministers of the King of the Franks, Agnoald, married to a Burgundian lady of noble family, he obtained from Gontran the possession of another ancient castle, Luxeuil, where there had been baths magnificently decorated by the Romans, and where, still, in the neighbouring forests could be seen the idols which the Gauls had worshipped. It was on the ruins of two civilizations that the great monastic metropolis of Austrasia and of Burgundy was planted.

“Luxeuil was situated on the borders of these two kingdoms, at the foot of the Vosges. All that country on the slopes of mountains of the Vosges and the Jura, afterwards Franche Comté, consisted, for an extent of sixty leagues in length, and ten to fifteen in breadth, of nothing but parallel chains of inaccessible defiles, broken by impenetrable forests, bristling with immense pine-woods which descended from the highest

¹ *Les Petits Bollandistes.*

summits of the mountains, and overshadowed the clear and rapid streams of the Doubs, the Dessoubre, and the Loire. The invasions of the barbarians, chiefly of Attila, had reduced the Roman cities to ashes, and had destroyed all the culture and all the population. Wild vegetation and wild beasts had again taken possession of this solitude, and it was reserved to the disciples of Columban and Benedict to transform them into fields and pasturage.

“Disciples soon crowded round the Irish colonizer. Soon he numbered many hundreds in the three monasteries that he had founded (Annegray, Luxeuil, and Fontaines), which he governed together. The Frank and Burgundian nobles, conquered by the sight of these homes of labour and prayer, brought him their sons, lavished donations on him, and often came to ask him to cut off their flowing hair, insignia of free noble birth, and to admit them into the ranks of his army. Labour and prayer had taken there, under the strong hand of Columban, proportions unheard of before. The crowd of poor serfs and rich seigneurs became so large, that he was able to organize the perpetual spiritual Office called *Laus perennis*, which

existed already at Agaune, on the other side of Lake Lemán.

“In this Office, day and night, the voices of the monks, ‘as unwearied as those of the angels,’ rose to celebrate the praises of God in a canticle without end. All, rich and poor, were equally kept to the work of clearing the ground, of ploughing, reaping, or cutting up wood, which Columban himself directed. With the impetuosity natural to him he spared no weakness. He exacted that even the sick should go and thrash the corn. One article of his Rule prescribes to the monk to go to bed so tired that he falls asleep at once, and rises again before he has slept enough. It was at the cost of this perpetual and excessive labour that half France and Europe were restored to cultivation and life.”

Nor were these years engrossed only in the warfare with Nature.

By his zeal for strict morality, and also by his loyal adhesion to many peculiar rites and customs of his own Celtic Church, which differed from those of Rome and the rest of Christendom, he made himself many enemies among the laity and the clergy. And to this day, as well as in

his own, naturally opinions differ as to this part of his conduct. Montalembert and the "new Bollandists" consider that "while signing himself 'Columban the sinner,' he evidently considers himself the doctor and teacher of those to whom he speaks, and even carries his pretensions so far as to attempt to bring round the Holy See to his opinions." On the other hand, Neander, while allowing that "he might have been more yielding in trivial outward things, considers that it was his purpose to oppose an usurping ecclesiastical authority, which did not recognize the rights of Christian freedom."

It is of more interest, as to understanding him, to read his own words, than any comments on them. He had certainly no wish to impose the Irish customs on the rest of the Church, but only to be allowed to retain them in his own monasteries.

When in 602 a Synod was held in France to deliberate on this subject, he wrote thus to the clergy assembled there:—"Differences of manners and customs have indeed been very injurious to the peace of the Church; but if we only hasten to extract the poison of pride, envy, and ^{*}pursuit of vain-glory, by the exercise of

true humility, according to the teaching and example of our Lord, who says, 'Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart,' as disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall mutually love one another with our whole heart; *for the lowly cannot strive*, since the truth will soon be recognized by those who, with the same purpose and the same desire to know the truth, seek what is best, where only error is vanquished, and no man glories in himself, but in the Lord." He concludes the letter with these words, "Since we should love one another with love unfeigned, let us diligently consider the commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ, and if we understand them, strive to fulfil them, in order that through His teaching, the whole Church, in a glow of holy zeal, may set her affections on things above. May His unmerited grace grant us this, to fly the world, and love Him alone; to seek Him with the Father and the Holy Ghost. For the rest, oh fathers, pray ye for us, as we, insignificant as we are, pray for you; and regard us not as strangers, for we are members of one body, be we Gauls, Britons, Irishmen, or of any nation whatsoever. Thus may we all from all nations rejoice in

the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, and hasten to become a perfect man, after the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; in which effort may we mutually help one another, care for one another, pray for one another, and triumph and rejoice together.”¹

To the end of his life, whether he were on the right side or the wrong on any particular point in debate, the same longing for freedom and love, for true unity through any external division, possessed him. Long afterwards, when he was an old man, and Abbot of Bobbio, there had been a schism which had endured many years in Italy. Eager to heal it, he wrote to the Pope, Boniface IV.:—“Watch first over the faith, then to encourage the works of faith, and eradicate vice; for your watchfulness will be the salvation as your neglect will be the destruction of many. We do not regard persons, but truth. Since you, in consequence of the dignity of your Church, have great honour, you should use great diligence in order not to lose your dignity by any error; for power will remain with you, as long as you remain on the right side. He is a true bearer of the

¹ Neander's *Denkwürdigkeiten*.

keys of the kingdom of heaven, who by true knowledge opens it to the worthy, and closes it against the unworthy. If he does the contrary, he can neither open nor shut. Since, therefore, you perhaps with a degree of pride claim for yourself a higher dignity and power with regard to Divine things, you should know that your power will be so much the less with the Lord, the more you think of it in your own heart, for unity of faith throughout the world has also brought forth unity of spiritual power, so that everywhere truth must be allowed a unity of access to all men, whilst error must be equally denied it. The confession of the truth obtained his privileges for our common father Peter." Then follows the beautiful exhortation, applicable to so many divisions, which arise from giving prominence to minor differences rather than to unity in the essentials of the faith, and thus rend the bond of love. "Therefore, beloved, return quickly to concord, and do not recur to old strifes, but rather be silent, and consign them to eternal oblivion. If anything is doubtful, leave it to the decision of God. But about what is evident, what is open to the judgment of men, judge ye without respect of persons.

Receive ye one another, that there may be joy in heaven over your peace and union. I know not how a Christian can strive with Christians about the faith. What the orthodox Christian who praises the Lord in the right way says, another will confirm with his Amen, since both believe and love the same thing."

Montalembert says:—"He preaches besides, union between the Secular and Regular clergy, and his language then becomes more solemn and full of emotion. 'I am not the author of this difference,' he says to the Synod; 'I have come, a poor stranger, into these lands for the sake of Christ our Saviour, the God and Lord of us all; I only ask one grace of your holinesses, that I may be allowed to continue to live in silence in the heart of these forests, near the bones of the seventeen brothers that I have already seen die there. These, with those who survive, will pray for you, as I ought, as I have always done these twelve years. Ah! let me live with you in this Gaul where we are, since we are to live with each other in heaven, if we are worthy to enter there! In spite of our coldness of heart, we will follow to our utmost the canons, the precepts of the Lord and the Apostles. These are our weapons, our

glory, our shield. It is to keep faithful to these that we left our country, and came to dwell with you. It rests with you, holy Fathers, to see what you will do with a few poor veterans, a few aged pilgrims, and if it is not better to cheer than to trouble them. I dare not go to you, for fear that I might get into contention with you; but I confess to you the secrets of my conscience, and how I believe, above all, in the tradition of my country, which is moreover that of St. Jerome.’”

IV.

BUT the permanent controversy of St. Columban was with vice and oppression, especially during his later years at Luxeuil: with the weak men and terrible women of the Merovingian royal family.

The dowager Queen Brunehault (not the especially wicked Brunehault—this lady, it is said, had herself passed a blameless youth), in order, it seems believed, to retain her own influence over her grandson, King Thierry, “moved (say *les Petits Bollandistes*) by the thirst of reigning” encouraged him in polygamy, to call it by no worse name.

Columban, with his Catholic and Irish practice and veneration of purity, was, it appears, expected to take the very mixed and questionable state of the young King's family as a matter of course. This he entirely declined to do. "What mean those children?" he said, when Queen Brunehault presented them to him. "They are the sons of the King; strengthen them by your benediction," said the Queen. "They will never reign," he replied, "they have an evil origin."

From that moment Queen Brunehault became his deadly enemy. She prohibited any of his monks from leaving their monasteries, and forbade any one to receive them or give them any aid.

Columban seems to have given up the Queen, but tried to bring back the young King. He went to him in his royal villa of Epoisses. The King had a sumptuous repast served him; but the Abbot refused to accept anything from the hand of the oppressor. It was believed that the dishes broke miraculously at his word, and the King, alarmed, promised to reform. But he did not reform, and Columban wrote him a letter full of vehement reproaches, threatening excommunication.

The young King, instigated by his grandmother,

presented himself at Luxeuil, and insisted on entering the refectory contrary to the Abbot's rule, saying that Columban must suffer people to enter, or renounce all royal gifts. Columban replied, "If you violate our rules, we have nothing to do with your gifts; and if you come here to destroy our monastery, know that your kingdom and your race will be destroyed."

Again the King was frightened; but he recovered and said, "Perhaps you hope that I will obtain you the crown of martyrdom, but I am not fool enough for that; only if you refuse all relations with secular men, you have but to go whence you came, back to your own country."

Columban refused to yield except to force. Accordingly they took him from his monastery to Besançon. There he won respect from all. He climbed to the citadel, and thence he saw the river Doubs, which flowed through the beloved solitudes of his own forests, and by the fields the labours of his monks had cleared. He took his resolution at once, and quietly walked back to his Luxeuil.

There the soldiers of the King found him; they knelt to him, and entreated him not to

endanger their lives by refusing to let them perform the cruel duty they detested.

For their sakes he yielded, and went with them. All the brotherhood would have followed their beloved father, but none except the Irish were allowed to leave.

And so they took again the path of exile. On their way through France they experienced some cowardly insults, but more chivalrous and generous proofs of love and honour. He seems not to have resented anything but a mean blow given to one of his monks, who was feeble and ill.

At Tours he spent the night by St. Martin's tomb, and there the bishop found him, and asked him to dine. At table some one asked him why he was returning to his country. Then he used strong language (there is always much human nature and force of speech in those Irish saints): "That dog Thierry," he said, "has driven me away from my brethren."

When he reached Nantes, his heart turned back to his Luxeuil, and he wrote a letter, which begins thus:—

"To his sweet sons, his dear scholars, his brothers in the frugal life, to all the monks, Columban the sinner."

In this letter, Montalembert says, "his heart opens altogether. Obscure, confused, passionate, interrupted by a thousand recollections, a thousand diverse agitations, this letter is nevertheless the most complete monument Columban has left us of his genius and of his character. With his own personal emotions are always blending his pre-occupation with the present and future destinies of his dear community of Luxeuil. He prescribes the arrangements which seem to him most likely to guarantee that destiny, by purity of elections and interior harmony. He seems even to foresee the immense development of the monastic colonies which were to go forth from Luxeuil, in a passage where he says, 'There where you shall find fit sites, there where God shall build with you, go and prosper; you and the thousands of souls that shall be born of you.' It is delightful to see in this rigid and proud soul paternal friendship and affection preserving all its rights. He recalls with a tender solicitude a brother who was not present at the moment of his farewells. 'Keep Valdolène always,' he says; 'keep him, if he is still with you. Oh, that God may do him good; that he may become humble; and give him from

me the kiss I was not able to give him myself.'

“He recommends to his monks truth, strength of mind, patience, but above all peace and concord. He foresees in this endless question of Easter, a subject of division; he desires that they should get rid of all who disturb the unanimity of the house. Confessions, counsels crowd under his pen. He addresses himself, now to the whole community, now to a monk called Attalus, whom he had intended to succeed him.

“‘Thou knowest, my beloved Attalus, how little it avails to form one body if we have not one heart. As to me, my heart has been rent. I wished to serve every one; I have trusted every one; and I have become nearly mad in consequence. Be thou then wiser than I have been; I would not have thee take up the burden which has cost me so much. But thou knowest all about it. Thou wilt know how to adapt the precepts to every one. Thou wilt make allowance for the diversities of character which are so great among men. Thou wilt diversify thyself, thou wilt multiply thyself for the good of those who will obey thee with truth and love; and all the while even their affection must be feared, for

it may become a danger for thee. But what is it that I am doing? See, I am urging thee to undertake that immense labour, from which I myself am torn away.'

“Further on, it is grief which bursts out and carries him away, but soon to give place to an invincible courage. The recollections of classical antiquity blending with the teachings of the Gospel, inspire our Irishman with some of the loftiest and most beautiful words ever uttered by Christian genius. ‘I had at first meant to write thee a letter of sadness and tears; but knowing well that thy heart is overwhelmed with cares and toils, I change my style; I seek to restrain thy tears rather than to make them flow. I let nothing but the sweetness be seen outside, and I chain up the sorrow in the depths of my soul. But here are my own tears that begin to flow; I must press them back; it becomes not a good soldier to weep in the front of the battle. After all, what is happening to us is nothing very new. Is it not what we have been preaching every day? Was there not once a philosopher who, being wiser than others, was thrown into prison for maintaining against the opinion of all that there is only one God? The Gospels, moreover, are

full of all we need to encourage us. They have indeed been written for this, to instruct the true disciples of the crucified Christ to follow Him with their cross. Our perils are many : the war we wage is keen, and the enemy is terrible ; but the reward is glorious, and the freedom of our choice is manifest. Without adversaries no conflict, and without conflict no crown. Where there is conflict there is courage, vigilance, fervour, patience, fidelity, wisdom, firmness, prudence. Without conflict misery and disaster. Thus, without conflict no crown ; and I add, without liberty no dignity.'

“ However, his letter has to be finished, and he does not know how to set about it ; for he recommences again and again, and repeats himself often. But others will take on themselves to interrupt him, and to put an end to those overflowings of his heart. ‘ Here is some one,’ he says, ‘ who comes to say the ship is ready ; this ship which is to take me, despite myself, back to my own country. The end of the parchment obliges me to finish my letter. Love has no order, that is what makes it confused. I wanted to condense everything in order to say everything. I have not succeeded. Farewell, dear hearts of mine ! Pray that I may live in God ! ’ ”

V.

AFTER writing this letter, Columban was detained at Nantes. The Bishop and the Court of Neustria hurried his departure; but the Irish vessel, on which were embarked the possessions and the companions of Columban, and which he was to rejoin in a boat, having presented itself at the mouth of the Loire, was driven back by the waves, and remained three days stranded on the shore. Then the captain made the companions of Columban disembark with their luggage and his, and continued his voyage. And Columban was left free to go whither he would.

Again the voice may have sounded in his heart as so many years before at Bangor, "Leave thy country, and thy father's house, and go where I shall shew thee." For France had become his country, and his monasteries the home of his heart, and there was yet other work for him to do. Not, however, among the fallen Christians of France. That work was done; heart after heart had been restored and raised; district after district had been brought into civilization and

cultivation. His work in France was done, and would never perish. On the ground, and by the race, he had won back to Christianity, not a century afterwards the invading hosts of Mohammed would be beaten back from the West for ever by Charles Martel.

He and his Irish monks were to go further afield; to the heathen of Switzerland, and thence to the lands harried and ravaged by the fierce Lombards in Italy.

He went first to Soissons, where King Clotaire II., son of Frédégonde, worsted and deprived of much of his territory, "faithful to the hatreds of his mother," hatreds in that Merovingian family, generally stronger than their affections, welcomed him fervently. To this king also Columban was very frank as to the disorders of his life, which he promised to amend. As Columban passed through Paris, Meaux, and Champagne, the nobles brought him their children, for his benediction. And some of the beloved monks of his own monasteries were able to escape and rejoin him.

At the head of this devoted band, among whom was Attalus, whom he had mentioned so especially in his letter from Nantes, he began

the new campaign for which he had longed all his life, amongst nations still heathen:—"After sixty years of labour consecrated to the reformation of kings and people already Christian, he began the second phase of his life—preaching to the infidel."

They went along the rivers, up the Rhine, and up the Limmat, and about the country around the Lake of Constance. They found the ruins of old Roman cities, and in one place a deserted Christian church, desecrated by idols which were worshipped by the pagans around. All the eager impetuosity of Columban's character, not at all dulled by age, awoke at the sight of the people deluded by false worship. His chief companion at this time was Gallus (St. Gall), a high-born young Irishman, as fervent as himself, whom he had trained from boyhood. Together they burned the heathen temples and broke the idols, especially one golden image, a relic of the old Roman days. Some of the people listened, and some were enraged. They were often driven away with violence, but the spell of paganism began to be broken.

And at Tuggen the men of Schwyz show to-day the place of the idols which they over-

turned, and the spring of which they drank when they preached the faith to their indignant forefathers.

“At Bregenz they had more success and some conversions, and there they were able to stay three years, though the mass of the people were still impenetrable. Then the little colony resumed their cœnobitic life. They had at first to struggle with hunger; for the people gave them nothing, and they had nothing to live on but the wild birds, who came to them like the manna to the Israelites in the desert, or wild fruits which they had to dispute with the beasts of the forest. But soon they had a vegetable garden with fruit trees. They had also a resource in fishing. Columban himself made the nets; Gall, the learned, eloquent preacher, cast them into the lake, and often had a good haul of fish.”

There is a poetical legend connected with Bregenz and the Lake of Constance. “One night while Gall was silently watching his nets in his boat, he heard the demon of the mountain call to the demon of the waters. ‘Here I am,’ replied the water-spirit. ‘Arise then,’ said the mountain-spirit, ‘and come and help me drive

away these strangers who have driven me from my temple; it is enough work for both of us together to expel him.' 'What is the good?' replied the water-demon; 'here is one of them on the edge of the water whose nets I have tried to break, and I have never succeeded. He is always praying, and never sleeps. We may do what we can, we shall never get the better of them.' Then Gall, in his boat, made the sign of the cross, and said to them, 'In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to depart from these places without daring to hurt any one.' Then he made haste to land, and ran to wake the Abbot Columban, who had the bell rung at once for the night office; but before the first psalm was chanted, they heard on the tops of the mountains the howling and wailing of the demons, at first resounding furiously, and then losing themselves in the distance, die away like the confused murmurs of a routed army."

Columban was verging on his three-score years, but his heart was as eager as ever with the true Apostolic yearning to press ever on to the untrodden ground, to bring glad tidings to those who had never heard. He had preached to the Celts and the Germans. There were still the

Slavonic tribes to be reached, and to those he longed to pass on. But one night he saw in a dream an angel who said to him: "See the world before thee; but stray not from thy path if thou wouldst eat the fruit of thy labours." He believed this vision to be a sign that the path he longed to take was not for him, and he renounced his choice.¹

Circumstances indicated that his destination must be Italy. At the moment of departure his beloved disciple Gall was seized with fever, and could not accompany him. Columban thought this was a weak yielding to the body, and said bitterly to him: "Ah, my brother, are you already weary of the toils I have made you endure?" And then he even forbade him if he separated from him to "say the Mass."

This command of Columban could not be obeyed, nor was his prophecy fulfilled. It was but the temporary injustice of a passionate heart that had often been wounded. The paths of both were protected by the same Hand of wisdom and love. Both served their Lord to the end devotedly and effectually, and before the end we shall see that their hearts were tenderly united once more.

¹ Montalembert.

But Columban seems to have entered with a sorrowful foreboding unusual with him on the then difficult and dangerous journey across the Alpine passes into Italy.

Montalembert thinks it was the recollection of this journey that dictated one of his Instructions to his monks. "O mortal life! how thou hast deceived, seduced, blinded! Thou fliest, and art nothing; thou appearest, and art but a shadow; thou mountest up, and art but smoke; thou fliest in coming, and thou comest flying; alike at the starting-point, different at the goal; sweet to the senseless, bitter to the wise; those who love thee know thee not, and those only know thee who despise thee. What art thou then, O human life? Thou art the *way* of mortals, and not their life; thou beginnest with sin, and closest with death; thou art therefore but a road, always unequal, long for some, short for others; broad for one, narrow for another; joyous for some, sad for others, but for all equally swift and without return. Therefore, oh miserable, human life, we must sound thy depths, question thee, but never trust in thee. We must traverse without sojourning. No one dwells on a high-road; we have but to walk over it to reach the fatherland."

And so with his one companion, the Burgundian Attalus, who was to have succeeded him as Abbot of Luxeuil, who did succeed him as Abbot of Bobbio, Columban left Gall behind, and entered Italy to pass the rest of his life. He was cordially welcomed by Agilulph, the Lombard King, who gave him a territory called Bobbio, a remote gorge of the Apennines, not far from the famous shores of Trebia, where Hannibal having crossed the Alps defeated the Romans. There was an old church in the place, but the monastery had to be built. The old Abbot insisted on sharing the labours of the workmen, carrying planks of pine up the rough mountain paths.

He made Bobbio another Luxeuil,—a place of spiritual training and intellectual and manual labour for Northern Italy. Quite recently a palimpsest of Cicero has been recovered from the Irish Abbot's library there, which still bears the inscription, "*Liber sancti Columbani de Bobbio.*" And there at sixty-eight he wrote an epistle to a friend, full of the classic recollections of his youth at Bangor,—Sappho, the Golden Fleece, the Judgment of Paris:—

Inclya vates
Nomine Sappho

Versibus istis
Dulce solebat
Edere carmen.
Dulciloquorum,
Carmina linquens
Frivola nostra
Suscipe lætus.

The old man's spirits had recovered. No doubt in his heart he had long forgiven St. Gall. His presence was a centre of light and affection and healthy activity. And as usual he was amply provided with enemies and battles. The Arians of Lombardy kept his controversial weapons keen and polished to the end.

Towards the close the old love of the solitude with Nature and with God came back on him. He retired to a cave in the side of one of the mountains near his abbey, A.D. 615. Here at the age of seventy-two he died, amongst the farewells of his monks, dearly beloved.

VI.

THE life of St. Gall, St. Columban's beloved pupil and friend, must be continued in order to give the beautiful story of their reconciliation, and

the generous atonement made by the master's dying lips.

When the two parted—Gall, stricken with fever, constrained to stay behind in Switzerland, the land of which he was to be recognized as the “Apostle,”—Columban, with a fire of wounded love in his heart, to be the bulwark of the faith and centre of new life in Italy—the story of Gall goes on thus¹ :—

“When they were driven out of that neighbourhood, and Abbot Columban turned his steps to Italy, Gallus was prevented by sickness from following him; and this circumstance was productive of much blessing to the tribes of that district; since but for this illness, Gallus would never have become what he did for the country. Gallus repaired with his fishing-nets to a priest called Willimar, who lived in an old castle, and who had once already entertained him with the Abbot Columban, and pointed out a residence for them. When, by his affectionate care, Gallus had recovered, he wished to find a place in the wilderness to build in. With this object he addressed himself to the deacon Hillibald, whose business it was to provide his convent with fish and game,

¹ Neander's *Denkwürdigkeiten*.

and who therefore often traversed the wilderness, and knew its paths well. Attended by him, he set out to seek a place adapted for building, and well provided with fresh water. The deacon gave him a terrific description of the beasts in the forest; but Gallus answered, 'It is the saying of the Apostle, If God be for us, who can be against us? All things work together for good to those who love God. He who delivered Daniel from the den of lions, can also deliver me from the power of the wild beasts.' Then the deacon said, 'Only put some bread and a small net into thy knapsack, and to-morrow I will guide thee into the wilderness. The God who hath brought thee to us from the far country, will send His angel with us, as once with His servant Tobias, and will show us a place suitable to thy pious work.' Armed by prayer, Gallus set out on his journey. When they had journeyed about three hours Hillibald said, 'Let us now take some bread and water, that we may be strengthened to go the rest of the way.' Gallus answered, 'My son, do thou what is needful to strengthen thee; I am resolved to taste nothing until God has shown me my desired place of rest.' But the deacon replied, 'Nay; we will share the inconvenience,

and then also the joy with one another.' Then they pursued their way until the evening, when they came to a stream full of fish, which precipitated itself from a rock. They succeeded in catching many fish; the deacon lighted a fire; he cooked the fish, and took bread from the knapsack. Gallus meanwhile went a little apart to pray; but he entangled himself in the bushes and fell. The deacon hastened forward to help him, but Gallus motioned him back, saying, 'Leave me; this is the appointed place for my resting-place throughout my life; here will I dwell.' He consecrated the place by prayer; and when he arose from his knees he made a cross out of the branch of a tree, and planted it in the ground; and on the cross he hung some relics, which he carried in a basket round his neck. Then, again, they both fell on their knees in prayer, and there they founded the convent which afterwards went by the name of St. Gall. There Gallus laboured in the education of youth, and in the training of monks and priests, by whom the seeds of Christian knowledge were farther spread, and thence he diffused many spiritual and temporal blessings among the people. When he received presents from the great men of the

country, he used to assemble the poor of the district, and distribute what he had received amongst them. On one of these occasions, one of his scholars said to him, 'My father, I have a costly silver vessel, beautifully embossed; if you will permit me I will keep it for a sacramental chalice.' But Gallus answered, 'My son, think on the words of Peter, "Gold and silver have I none," and in order not to do anything contrary to so wholesome an example, hasten to employ the vessel for the good of the poor. My teacher, Columban, used to distribute the Body of the Lord in vessels of common metal.'"

"The vacant see of Constance was offered to Gallus; but he preferred to continue his quiet labours in the monastery, and refused the office. He recommended for the office in his stead the deacon John, a native of the country under his guidance" (Gallus had an especial gift for languages, and spoke and preached to the people of the land in their own German dialects). "When, at the consecration of the bishop, a great multitude flocked together, Gallus availed himself of this opportunity in order to describe to the new converts the love of God as manifested in creation and redemption, and to lay before them the

great scheme of God for the salvation of men, and” (although he spoke three languages, preferring, it is to be supposed, the use, on this occasion, of the lips of a native) “what he said in the Latin language was interpreted by John into German for the benefit of the assembled multitude.”

Of the Creation he said, “God created beings endowed with reason to praise Him; and by Him, in Him, and through Him to live happily. This cause of your creation you should recognize, my Christian brethren, lest ye should have to regard yourselves as lost beings, destroying your dignity by a brutish life. For that God, who is the highest good, resolved to create beings in His own image, endowed with reason, that acknowledging Him as their Lord, and the Author of their existence, and filled with His love, they should rejoice to find their happiness in Him.”¹

Then he deduces the origin of all evil, from the desire of reasonable beings to be the basis of their own existence, and to find life and happiness in themselves; thence arose their *inward void*, inasmuch as the creature, if turned away from the fountain of life, and abandoned to itself, must

¹ Neander's *Denkwürdigkeiten*.

sink from fulness into emptiness, from existence into nothingness. He closed the whole discourse with this exhortation, "We who are the unworthy messengers of faith in this age, we conjure you, in the name of Christ, that ye renounce the devil and all his works, as ye have once renounced him in your baptism; that ye acknowledge the one true God and Father, who ruleth eternally in heaven: the Eternal Wisdom who for us became a man in time, and the Holy Ghost, the earnest of eternal bliss granted us on this pilgrimage; and that ye seek to live as becomes the children of God. Be ye kind one to another, forgiving one another, as God has forgiven you your sins. The Almighty God, who wills that all men should be saved, and should come to a knowledge of the truth, who sends His message to your ears by the ministry of my tongue, may He Himself cause it to bring forth fruit in your heart by His grace."

The story of the reconciliation of Columban is told in the life of St. Magnus.¹ On the eve of their separation and the departure of Columban into Switzerland, Columban is said to have addressed these words to Magnus, which show

¹ Quoted by Miss Margaret Stokes, in her *Six Weeks in the Apennines*. It is also given briefly by Montalembert.

indeed that however indignant and unjust Columban may have been, the love for his son in the faith was unquenched in his heart from the beginning, even when he seemed the hardest.

“I tell thee, Magnus, what thou art to do. I wish that thou shouldst remain with Gallus until the time comes for me to depart this life, and if the Holy Spirit should reveal to you the fact of my illness, it would then be pleasing to me that thou shouldst come to my side. But in the event of my death, in whatsoever manner it may take place, and if God grant that it may be revealed to thee, then hasten with all speed to my tomb and to my brethren, and there thou shalt receive my letter and my crosier, which bring to Gallus, that he may know he is not condemned by me.”

* * * * *

“Now it happened on a certain day, after some time had elapsed, while they were betaking themselves to their couches to rest after the fatigue of the office of matins, at first dawning of the day, Gallus, the man of God, called Magnus his deacon, and said unto him, ‘Prepare for the administration of the sacred offering, that I may be able to celebrate the holy mysteries without delay.’ And Magnus said, ‘Wilt thou indeed cele-

brate the Mass, father?’ And Gallus answered him, ‘Through the watches of the night, I have learned through a dream that my father Columban has this day passed from the trouble of this life to the joys of Paradise. I must therefore offer the sacrifice of salvation for his repose.’

“Afterwards Gallus laid it on Magnus not to think his petition too heavy a burden, but to hasten across the Alps to Bobbio to see if his dream were indeed true, ‘and to inquire what has been done concerning my Abbot.’

“The deacon throwing himself at his master’s feet complained of this journey through a land unknown to him. But the blessed man with a soft voice admonished him not to fear, saying, ‘Go, and the Lord will direct thy footsteps.’ And he went; and when he arrived at the monastery of Bobbio, he found all had happened as it had been revealed to his father in the vision. He remained one night with the brethren, who gave him a letter for the blessing of Gallus, containing an account of the passing of the revered Columban. They also sent by the hand of the deacon the crosier of Columban, saying that the holy Abbot before his death had declared that through means of this well-known pledge Gallus would be

absolved (know he was forgiven). Then Magnus hastened on his journey, and arrived on the eighth day. He went at once to Gallus bearing the letter and the staff. Having read the letter, Gallus, retaining in his full heart the love of his dear father, shed many tears, and disclosed to the assembled fathers the causes of his grief. Then they celebrated the memory of the father with prayer and oblations.”¹

The time would fail us to tell of all the fruits of Columban's work in France, through his own teaching, and through his successors and his countrymen, many of them more or less moved by his influence and example.

Montalembert gives one chapter to “the influence of the disciples of Columban in Italy and Switzerland,” and another to the “Colonies of Luxeuil.”

In Italy the Missions of the Irish Saints were continued at Lucca by Fridiano,—St. Finnian—(some have thought of Merville, St. Columba's old friend and temporary foe, no longer grudging books, or life, but spending himself for the people, turning the course of rivers and giving forth waters of life. But this is disputed). St. Donatus

¹ v. Miss Margaret Stokes, *Six Weeks in the Apennines*.

and St. Andrew lived and laboured at Fiesole, and Andrew's sister St. Brigid at Lobaco among the mountains, St. Comgall at Pavia, St. Sillan (Silas) and his sister Mionghar (Mingarda) at or about Lucca, in much haze and halo of legend, yet still leaving traces in Italy of a true life come forth from Ireland.

In Switzerland, St. Gall, "the Apostle of Switzerland," whose monastery became a Luxeuil, a centre of faith and civilization for the mountain land; and Fridolin, the Apostle of Glarus.

Far and wide through Europe, rekindling the faith in the hearts of lapsed Christians, inspiring it among heathen who had never known the name of Christ, or only known it to misunderstand it through unChrist-like men and women, the light from Celtic Ireland spread—Patrick's Ireland in the far Western Sea—through genuine Irish Saints of the type of Columba and Columban, fervent, imaginative, impetuous, tender, ever fresh fountains of life.

It might indeed, as Montalembert says, "be enough glory for Columban to have been one of the mediators who worked under the inspiration of Christianity for the fusion of Celts and Germans, the two greatest races of the West."

ST. BONIFACE, APOSTLE
OF GERMANY.

ST. BONIFACE.¹

THE first English Missionary Bishop martyred among the heathen, but not the last. From the cold snows of Friesland to the Islands of the Pacific Ocean, and to the heart of Africa; from the ninth century to the nineteenth, our English Church has sent forth her sons to join the "noble army" with whom she daily praises God in the *Te Deum*. And she is sending them still.

In the century between St. Columban's death in the cave among the Apennines (A.D. 615), and Boniface's first going forth from his abbey to be a Missionary among the heathen in Friesland (A.D. 716), much had happened. There is nothing more suggestive to the imagination in repeopling the past than comparative tables of dates. Numbers are certainly at least as necessary

¹ The larger part of this life of St. Boniface has been already published in the writer's *Martyrs and Saints of the Twelve First Centuries*. But it is necessary to complete the group in this volume.

to history as to chemistry, to give us the true elements, the true proportions, and the true values. Chronology and geography not less but more, as historical study advances, are felt to be indeed the two eyes of History.

To see who were the people actually living in the world at one time, is just one of the things that begins to transform Chronicles into History. For instance, it gives much vividness and reality to our conception of the lives of Bede and Boniface, to remember how these two men, with such different characters and careers, were living in this world together, serving Christ and the world together in their diverse ways.

Bede was born in 674, ten years after the Synod of Whitby, which decided the assimilation of the English Church in rites and organization with the rest of Christendom, and sent the noble Celtic monks back to the North. For forty years he never left his monastery of Jarrow, leading the life of a student and a professor there. Six hundred monks were under his instructions, and scholars flocked to him from all sides. "I am my own secretary," he says; "I make my own notes; I am my own librarian." He lived in a world of books—the Greek books Archi-

bishop Theodore of Tarsus had introduced into our England, as well as the Latin; Plato and Aristotle in Greek, as well as Seneca and Cicero, Lucretius and Ovid, and the ever-venerated Virgil, were read and loved in England. The study of the Sacred Scriptures, so dear to the Celtic monks—from Ireland and Iona—had become Bede's peculiar inheritance, his joy, and his vocation. But he was no mere man of books. To him the past, the men of the past, the languages of the past were living, because continuous, flowing on into the present. The Saints of the past were to him a living Communion, because his eyes were open to see and reverence the Saints of his own day, and even those not entirely of his own section of thought. He could understand St. John because he could understand St. Aidan. He could understand the Greek of the Gospels, because he translated it in life and in word into the life and speech of his own English people. Most significant and beautiful is the tender story of his death.

“Dearest master,” one of us then said to him, “we have one chapter to translate” (of the Gospel of St. John into English), “will it be grievous to thee if we ask thee any further?” He answered,

“It is quite easy; take the pen and write quickly.”

“He lived through the day, with great love and joy and fear, longing to depart and be with Christ.” Then at evening the same scholar who had written for him on that morning said to him, “Dearest master, there is only one thought left to write.” He answered, “Write quickly.” Soon the scholar replied, “Now this thought is written.” He answered, “Thou hast well said. It is finished.”¹ And with the Gloria, with the name of the Holy Ghost on his lips, he breathed his last breath. Bede died in peaceful Jarrow in 735, at sixty years old. Boniface died in 755, twenty years afterwards, an old man of seventy-five, surrounded by the fierce heathen he came to save, he also with the book of the Gospels in his dying hands. So long these two soldiers had lived parallel lives, serving in their different parts of the field and departments of the service—not knowing each other, yet labouring for the civilization and Christianization of England and Germany.

Through all their lives, peaceful as Bede’s was, the struggle was going on fiercely between the

¹ Neander’s *Denkwürdigkeiten*.

different kingdoms of Saxon England, with every now and then a combat with the Britons of Strathclyde and North and West Wales. The Celtic monks and their disciples had been working throughout the land. At the same time the organization of the dioceses had been advancing from Canterbury, Archbishop Theodore summoning national ecclesiastical councils, which were the virtual beginning of the great National Councils of the English Parliament.¹

But many a wilderness was left little touched by Christianity in our Eastern Fens. The monasteries were still Mission Stations in many parts, though dioceses and parishes were consolidating.

Boniface's own birthplace, Crediton, was on the verge of the British corner of England—of Cornwall, still speaking the language, in a measure, of Ireland and Iona, open to especial Missions of Irish Saints of her own. But the monasteries in which Boniface lived and was trained were Benedictine.

It is again interesting, in tracing the links between the various races of our land, to observe that the first Mission on which St. Boniface went,

¹ *v. Green's History of the English People.*

was to Friesland, to the aid of St. Willibrord, who himself had visited Ireland to learn and be trained there, and had spent twelve years in the Irish monasteries, as so many young Englishmen at the end of the seventh century still did, to enter into their devoted study of the Holy Scriptures, and to catch the inspiration of their devotion and missionary fervour.

Winfried, afterwards named Boniface, was born at Crediton, among the pleasant hills of Devonshire, near Exeter. One wishes he had not changed his beautiful old English name with its sweet breathing of peace for any other.

At five years old the little child's heart seems to have been awakened by a heavenly touch never forgotten. Good monks from the monasteries near were in the habit, according to the custom of the Celtic or Irish communities, of going on missions through the neighbouring countries, sometimes preaching on the village greens, and resting under lowly cottage roofs; at other times accepting the hospitality of the great men of the place, and then hallowing the houses of their hosts with their prayers and teachings. And the child Winfried, listening (as a thousand years afterwards the boy John

Coleridge Patteson listened to Bishop Selwyn), with wondering eyes, to the words of the strangers, probably himself unnoticed, drank them in until the Spirit speaking through them became in him a well of living water, springing up and flowing forth as a fountain of life for the great German land. Henceforth it seemed to the child that the home where those good men lived must be as the very gate of heaven, and there he desired to live. At first his father opposed, but the boy's purpose continued steadfast, until at last, when he was about thirteen, he was brought to the verge of death by a serious illness; and then the father accepted his son's desire as a Divine vocation, and gave him to God with an acquiescence as generous and unreserved as in after days the father of John Coleridge Patteson.

He passed many years in the Abbey at Exeter, and then he removed to the Abbey of Nutcell, in the diocese of Winchester, one of the great schools of the time. There he studied diligently, and learned all that was to be learned—poetry, rhetoric, history. There also, above all, he steeped his heart and mind in the Holy Scriptures, and was in time appointed a teacher in

literature and history, having always much delight in being among the young. At thirty he was ordained priest, and from that time was chiefly occupied in preaching to the people around, and in the cure of souls. His ability and judgment were early recognized. And he was sent on a deputation to the Archbishop of Canterbury. He was also much consulted in the Councils of his Church, and was honoured and courted by all.

But deep in his heart all the time was burning a fire of missionary zeal, fed doubtless by the stories told from monastery to monastery of the work of Willibrord in Friesland, and of other missionaries. Especially he longed to carry the Gospel to those ancient German lands from which his own forefathers had come. And in A.D. 716, his friend Abbot Wimbert gave his sanction to his going forth as a missionary to the heathen of Friesland. He needed not to learn any new language to make himself understood. For a hundred years, from the coasts of Great Britain the tide of Christian life had been flowing back in missionary enterprise to the Continent of Europe; and through what is now the North of France, Switzerland, Belgium,

Bavaria, and Hesse, on the mountains, and among the primeval forests, and on the sites of abandoned Roman cities, were founded monasteries peopled by men from Great Britain, followers of Columban, St. Gall, and other adventurous spiritual pioneers. It is interesting to remember that, as regards England, the first missionary impulse seems to have been given by a young priest named Egbert, by one who, like so many others, had found instruction and inspiration among the monastic communities in Ireland, and had devoted himself to evangelizing the Continent; but just as he was starting on his voyage he was arrested by illness, was left behind by his companion, and was never able to follow.

Friesland was then in a state of wild turmoil on account of the war between King Radbrod and Charles Martel.

(It is of Radbrod that the story is told that once, when considering the possibility of becoming a Christian, he asked a missionary as a preliminary inquiry what had become of the kings his ancestors who had not believed; the missionary replied that they were in torment in the other world; whereupon Radbrod replied,

“I see no good in my going to heaven with a few poor people. I shall keep to the religion of my fathers!” And he became a violent persecutor.)

After remaining the summer in Friesland, where Willibrord of Yorkshire, trained in the northern monasteries, had long been labouring, Boniface returned to England, the steadfastness of his purpose tested, as so often, by disappointment. Two years he remained at his monastery, where, on the death of his old friend Abbot Wimbert, he was elected Abbot. But the passion for clearing new ground, which has always been such a large element in English life, was not to be quenched in the heart of Boniface. He longed to penetrate new lands, found new churches, monasteries, schools; to bring the good news for the first time to new tribes of men, yet allied to his own in speech and blood. He was moved, as he said, “by the love of travel and the fear of Christ”; the loving fear of selfishly hoarding a treasure which was meant to enrich the world, and the *Wandertrieb* of our race.

Boniface had reached the sober age of thirty-eight when he set out on his missionary career again, this time never to return.

His thirty-seven remaining years were to be devoted to the glorious work given him to do.

No doubt his first unsuccessful missionary expedition, with the interval of rest in the English monastery afterwards, had been no lost or waste time to him. He had learned, at all events, one of the first lessons in all work, to see its especial difficulties.

Before proceeding again on a pilgrimage to a field of foreign missions, he went to Rome, with a letter from his Bishop, Daniel of Winchester, to Pope Gregory II. A very different journey for Boniface from what it had been when four centuries before Alban of Verulam went to Rome (according to the legend), to complete his education there; the Roman roads broken into disconnected fragments, the military stations and post-houses gone, the way beset with perils from wild tribes of invaders, none of which recognized each other or themselves as the germs (which nevertheless they were) of future nations; a world without form and void, of chaotic ruins and chaotic beginnings; the Church the only organization left standing throughout it, like a highly-developed vertebrate organism amidst a floating mass of mol-

luscious or crustaceous creatures, which wore whatever bony substance they had mainly outside, in the form of bristling armour wherewith to destroy each other.

He went with a band of English pilgrims, and on the way through Gaul and Italy they made their devotions at the shrines of the martyrs, who had mostly belonged to the old Roman vanished world. And when he reached the city, what a different Rome! In Alban's Rome Christians might still be thrown to the wild beasts in the Coliseum; on the Capitol and all around stood the temples of the gods, basilicas, theatres. For Boniface all that ancient world had vanished—emperor, “senate and people,” gods and goddesses, basilicas transformed into churches, pillars of temples into pillars of Christian shrines, statues which could not be transformed broken up, or only saved by being lost.

Yet still, still more than ever, to Boniface Rome was the imperial and metropolitan city; imperial because Christian, metropolis because the citadel of the city of God. Every church on the Capitol of the dethroned Jove, or in the catacombs of the martyrs, was a trophy of victory over a whole ancient world of vanquished foes,

and might become a triumphal arch into a new world of conquest over the new heathenism of the North, which Boniface had vowed his life to overcome. From the Vatican, where the martyrs now venerated throughout Christendom had illumined Rome in their agony as living torches from Nero's gardens; from the Capitol where the Ara Cœli, the Altar of Heaven, had replaced the altar of Jove; from the Aventine, whence the great Gregory had sent Augustine to convert Boniface's own heathen forefathers, the English Winfried might well gather inspiration to go forth and fell any sacred oak of Thor the Thunderer, or to encounter any perils among the heathen of the North.

At Rome, moreover, he touched the historical past of Christianity. The language, which for him was the language of the Church and the sacred books, was still at Rome, as to St. Agnes or St. Cæcilia, St. Augustine or St. Gregory, the everyday life. The Devonshire Winfried did not need to learn a new language for Thuringia and the Rhineland. But in Rome he distrusted his scholastic Latin, which he had learned as a foreign tongue, and feared to express his creed except in writing.

From Rome also the monk from remote Devonshire could gain a new wide outlook over the Eastern and Western world.

Severed as the Church was, even then, the great destructive tide of Mohammedanism, which had laid waste the Churches of Asia Minor and Africa, of Polycarp and Augustine, and was rolling up through Bulgaria on the East and through conquered Spain on the South into the heart of Europe, could be felt, even from the Seven Hills, surging against the whole of Christendom.

Unity, external unity, might well seem to him, looking from that central height over the devastated East and the stormy heathen North, not a mere dream of some far-off paradise, but a necessity of bare existence.

Three times in his missionary life of thirty-eight years Boniface came to Rome: first, in 719, with a letter from his friend, Bishop Daniel of Winchester, to introduce him to Pope Gregory II., and to receive his sanction and counsel; secondly, in 722, summoned by the same Pope to report results of his three years' labour, and receive consecration as bishop (*regionarius*) of the new mission; thirdly, seventeen years afterwards, in 739, at his own desire, to see the new

Pope, Gregory III., to tell of his 100,000 German converts, and to receive fresh powers as Archbishop of Mainz. Gregory, with the true tact and instinct of the ruler, perceived at once his capability for his vocation, and sent him away with the encouragement of his sympathy and the sanction of his authority, armed also with letters to Charles Martel, then the great ruler of the Christianized Franks, entreating him to aid the English missionary in converting the Saxon tribes Charles was endeavouring to subdue, and also empowering Boniface to restore to the faith the half-lapsed Christians, remnants of the Christianity of the old Roman frontier, and to organize or gather together the scattered communities founded during the past century by the Irish missionaries. For from the beginning to the end the work of Boniface was twofold—winning new converts from the outside barbarian world, and gathering into unity of communion and discipline the lapsed or disorganized Christians already there. He went first to Thuringia; and there through the great Thuringian forest, then all forest (afterwards Martin Luther's land), our Devonshire Winfried went up and down, preaching and baptizing, often in hunger and poverty, and peril of

life, but never weary of gathering into the fold the lost and wandering sheep altogether outside, or of gathering together the scattered sheep from solitary hermitages or small communities, who were in danger from their isolation of being again absorbed into the heathen world around.

From Thuringia he made an expedition to Friesland, the first scene of his missionary labours, never forgotten by his heart, and so strangely interwoven with his missionary life from its beginning to its martyr close. It was opened again now to Christian work by the death of the heathen king, Radbrod, and Boniface laboured there for two or three years assisting his countryman, Archbishop Willibrord. Willibrord much wanted to keep him as his coadjutor and successor; but Boniface was too essentially a pioneer and founder to be able to stop in regions already half won. He returned to Thuringia, and on his way back, as he passed through the land of the Rhine and the Moselle, one story is told of him which illustrates the winning charm by which he drew fellow-labourers around him, and kept them faithful to the end.

On the banks of the Moselle, near ancient Roman Treves (where St. Athanasius had so-

journed, and where St. Augustine's soldier-friends had found the life of St. Anthony, which changed their lives and gave the final enkindling touch to his conversion), Boniface was received hospitably by the venerable Abbess Addula. At table, according to the custom of the times, a boy of fifteen, fresh from school, the Abbess' grandson, Gregory, read a passage from the Latin Bible.

"You read well, my son," said Boniface, "if you understand what you read."

The boy, not catching his meaning, said he perfectly understood.

"Well then," said Boniface, "tell me how you understand it."

The boy began to read the passage again.

Then Boniface said, "No, my son, that is not what I mean. I want you to translate what you have read into your native language."

The boy at once acknowledged that he could not do this. So when he had read it again distinctly, Boniface translated it into German, and preached on it to the whole company. And the Word sank so deep into the boy's heart, that nothing would satisfy him but to go himself with Boniface to learn from him to understand the Holy Scriptures.

“If thou wilt not give me a horse,” he said to his grandmother the Abbess, “I will go with him on foot.”

The Abbess saw that a Divine power had touched the lad's heart, and she gave him a horse and a servant, and suffered him to go away with Boniface, whom he followed thenceforth whithersoever he went among the heathen in the forests, to Rome, and finally to his martyr death.

And after his master's death Gregory continued to follow his footsteps till he was an old man of seventy, teaching the young, and making his monastery a training-school of Missionaries.

In Thuringia, Boniface baptized many thousands of idolaters, destroying their temples, and built churches. The form of renunciation which he demanded of these German converts indicates the discrimination and thoroughness of his work. He was not content merely with the usual form, “I renounce the devil and all his works.” He asked, “Dost thou renounce Woden, Seator, and Freya?” No vague promises of general goodness would satisfy him. The especial temptations of each were to be especially renounced.

From Thuringia he wrote to Pope Gregory, speaking of his success, and asking his counsel

about some practical difficulties. In reply, the Pope congratulated him, and desired him to repair again to Rome. That second visit was doubtless of great importance in Boniface's life. This time he looked out from the Seven Hills on no new work, no unexplored land. He had surveyed his ground, tried his weapons, found out his difficulties, and trained many of his fellow-labourers.

From Rome Winfried went forth the second time as Boniface (the new name given him there), bishop (*regionarius*) of the new lands, with authority to claim the obedience of all Christians already existing there, or to be converted. From the ancient trophies of past victories he went forth; from the dethroned Jove of the Capitol, to cut down the sacred oak of the Teutonic Thor in Hesse.

Soon after his second return to Germany he found many of his apparent converts hopelessly mixing up the new faith and its sacred rites with the old. He determined, therefore, that the moment had come for a visible manifestation that the two could not be combined. There was an enormous oak in the forests of Hesse, near the village of Giesmar, sacred to Thor. Boniface went forth with his clergy to fell it publicly

to the ground. It was regarded on both sides as a trial of strength. The heathen must already, in spite of their menacing attitude, have been in some measure shaken, to allow of such an attempt being made at all. Boniface bravely took the axe in his own hands. The heathen multitude awaited the result in silence.

After a few strokes a mighty wind seemed suddenly to sway its lofty branches, and the grand old tree crashed down, splitting with its weight into four huge pieces.

Then the heathen confessed their gods to have been vanquished, and at once acknowledged themselves subjects of this new Lord, whom they saw to be so strong, and whom Boniface declared to be so merciful and ready to forgive. A little forest oratory was built at once of the wood of the fallen shrine. It was the first church of the country. But great as the victory was, it was only the beginning of the conquest. It is remarkable that this event is almost the only approach to miracle in St. Boniface's life. He never claimed to work miracles. The claim to miracle-working was made by Adalbert, one of the unattached monks, whose opposition was one of his chief difficulties.

One characteristic of Boniface's work seems to have been its resemblance to the methods of working in our own times. Around the story of the earlier Irish missionaries play far more of the glow and twilight mystery of legend. They were principally hermits and recluses, like the Fathers of the Desert. They went into the wilderness not so much to seek for the heathen as to find solitude and freedom for a disciplined life. They became centres of civilization simply by being civilized. They spread the light of Christianity by simply gathering it into a focus and shining. They felled the trees in the forest-depths and made them into dwellings and chapels; they tilled fields, sowed and reaped, made nets, and fished in the lakes and rivers, while the wild tribes around them looked on and learned. They said to themselves or to each other in raptures of contemplation and devotion (seeing Jesus as He walked among them), "Behold the Lamb of God!"—and the heathen people drew near and listened, and found the Christ.

They settled (like St. Gall) among the ruins of some ruined Roman city, again lapsed into wild forest, taking the stones of the deserted

temples to build their churches, and breaking in pieces the graven images which the wild tribes around had dreaded or worshipped as relics of vanished supernatural beings. On Sundays and holy days St. Columban would carry a heavy volume of Sacred Scriptures on his shoulder into the forest-depths to hold converse with God, and the people watching, came to perceive that these mysterious parchments had voices, and that there was an unseen God and Friend who can speak to us and be spoken to. The writings of St. Columban and others of these monks are, as we have seen, full of deep spiritual piety.

And so carrying on this inward combat, leading this inward life, they were doubtless also combating and conquering for the world around them. An intense fire of self-renouncing and enrapt devotion shines out from these early Missionaries, the new Fathers of the Desert in Burgundy and Switzerland, and along the frontiers of old Rome, lapsed again into wilderness; and also a tender glow as from the paradise and childhood of the world. The "Spirit of the Mountain," speaking from his lonely height to the "Spirit of the Waters," acknowledges the mystic power of these strangers. Savage beasts,

wolves and bears, fawn on them ; birds of prey bring them food ; timid, hunted creatures trust them and take refuge with them. Their story comes to us like soft music across the wide waters of the past. But with Boniface we seem to speak in the language of to-day, and in some ways the contrast may seem like coming from poetry to prose ; from some lovely, quaint old ballad to the less fascinating literature of a missionary report. We have however but to recover the poetic gold by digging deeper for it ; and if we do we shall certainly find it, not in grains but in nuggets.

Boniface worked no physical miracles, unless we except the fall of the Sacred Oak of Thor. Once indeed, it is said, a huge bird opportunely dropped a fish above his table when he had not much on it ; but the attention does not seem to have been repeated. The source of his supplies were not ravens or angels, but contributions from friends in his old English home of books and clothes, and food and money. The miracles wrought for him were in hearts moved to help him. His one great miracle was the conversion of Germany. Before all and through all he was a missionary. He went into the wilderness not

for its solitude, but because the wandering sheep were there.

From this great purpose he never seemed to have swerved for a moment. If he seeks from the Abbess Eadburga a beautiful manuscript of the Epistles of St. Peter, written in golden letters, it is to move the admiration of his Germans. For himself another kind of gold was more beautiful. As he said at the Council of Tivoli, "Formerly the priests were of gold, and they used chalices of wood. Now the chalices are of gold, and the priests of wood."

And in his conflicts, whether mistaken or not, with some of the earlier monks—Irish and others—it was (as with St. Cyprian of old) the safety, the very existence of the scattered flock which he sought in his contests for unity and his efforts at gathering them together.

For his fellow-labourers, and for his sustenance, Bishop Boniface looked chiefly to his old English home, and thence they were liberally sent. As he worked unremittingly, the fruits of his mission so increased from day to day, that he obtained many fellow-labourers from England. "And also from the convents of Great Britain came a swarm of widows, virgins, mothers, sisters,

cousins of the Missionaries, eager to share their labours and their perils. Chriemhild, and Berathgilt, her daughter, stayed in Thuringia. Chiudrad was sent to Bavaria, and Thekla remained at Ketzingen on the Main; Lioba, beautiful as the angels, of a ravishing eloquence, learned in the Scriptures and the sacred canons, governed the Abbey of Bischofsheim. These ferocious Germans, who had formerly delighted in blood and battles, came to kneel at the feet of these gentle teachers (*ces douces maitresses*). Their own silence and humility have hidden their labours from the eyes of the world; but their place is at the origin of German civilization. Providence has placed women beside all cradles.”¹

St. Lioba was herself a poetess. She studied the Old and New Testaments deeply, also the Fathers; ruled her convent firmly and tenderly; was dearly beloved by her pupils, and exercised a free hospitality to Court and peasants, serving her guests with her own hands. She was a cousin of Winfried of Crediton, and came from near his old home. Many of the letters of St. Boniface are to women; but with Lioba it seems

¹ *Les Petits Bollandistes*, quoting Ozanam. Also ex Othloni Vita S. Bonifacii, in the *Monumenta Moguntina*.

as if the double tie of natural and spiritual kindred, the double associations of early memories and high common aims, had made the tie very close. Brief as the glimpses given us are, she seems to stand as a helpmate beside him, as St. Scholastica beside her brother St. Benedict, and St. Clara by St. Francis d'Assisi.

His power of attaching disciples to himself was great, the true spiritual power of winning hearts, not to a helpless clinging, but to a brave following; so that when he died he left not a wailing group of forlorn orphans, but a valiant company of teachers and Missionaries, ready to be martyrs in their turn.

So the years went on, occupied in penetrating further and further among the heathen tribes, in founding monasteries to be centres of Christianity and civilization, in organizing the new converts to be instructed within the Christian Church. Boniface (like Bishop Patteson) never returned to his native England. But his heart never left it. Many of his letters are to Englishwomen—Abbesses of various monasteries. To one, the royal Abbess Eadburga, when she had sent him some manuscripts of the Scriptures, he writes, thanking her that she had “consoled the exile

by Divine Light, for he who had to visit the dark recesses of heathenism would fall into the jaws of death if he had not the Word of the Lord as a lamp to his feet.”¹ To another—“Pray for me; that He who dwells on high, yet hath regard to the lowly, may forgive me my sins, that His Word may arm me with joyful liberty of speech, that the Gospel of the glory of Christ may have full access among the heathen.”

To some nuns—“Pray diligently that we may be delivered from unrighteous and cruel men; that the glory of Christ may be glorified. I would not die unfruitful. I would not go home without leaving some sons and daughters behind me.”

To the English clergy—“Seek to obtain by your prayers that our one God and Lord Jesus Christ, who wills that all men shall be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth, may convert the hearts of these heathen Saxons to the faith. Have confidence in them, for the people are wont to say, ‘We are of one flesh and one blood with you.’”

To an English Abbot—“I need your prayers, because the sea of Germany is so perilous to

¹ *Monumenta Moguntina.*

navigate, that I may not, while I seek to enlighten others, be myself covered with the darkness of my own sins. Pray the beloved Champion of us all, the only Refuge of the distressed, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, that our gracious Father may place burning torches in our hands, that we may enlighten the heathen to see the Gospel of the glory of Christ."

And on the other hand, to King Ethelbald, King of Mercia, he writes a letter in which, while rendering honour to what was good in him, his strict prohibition of theft and perjury, his preserving peace, and befriending the widow and the poor, he boldly reminds him how all was marred by the unchastity of his own life.

"The heathen Saxons," he writes, "might be an example to the Christian King in this. Though a ruler of many he is making himself a slave of sin." He entreats him to have compassion on the perishing multitude his evil example is misleading to their destruction, and nobly warns him how, if the sanctity of marriage is dishonoured, the result is a degenerate race, ever sinking lower and lower.

The character of his preaching seems to have

been discriminating, and practical; no mere rhetoric or commonplaces, but plain words pressed home. He seems to have followed the advice of his friend Daniel, Bishop of Winchester, to learn accurately what the religion of the heathen was, acknowledging all that was good in it, or in them (for instance, their great virtue of chastity), seeking not to irritate them by violent denunciation, but by patient and gentle questioning to let them find out for themselves the unreasonableness of their belief in comparison with the Christian faith.

Fifteen of his sermons are preserved to us. In one he says, "See, my beloved, what a message we bring you; not a message from one in whose service you may purchase exemption, (as in the German) but from Him to whom you are indebted for His Blood shed for you!"

And then he passes on to the sacredness of marriage.

Again, in meeting the objection so often made, that if Christianity were so necessary, surely God would not have left the world so long without it, he passes on from the theoretical difficulty to the practical remedy. "Know that he who, however late, refuses to be healed, has

no right to complain of the dilatoriness of the physician. Wherefore dost thou murmur at the Sun of Righteousness having risen so late, when even after His rising thou still walkest in darkness ? ”

In another sermon, to the newly-baptized, after speaking to them as to children of “the great city of Rome, and the mighty chief called Augustus, who once reigned in it, who made peace in all the world,” he goes on—“ Listen, my brethren, attentively, to what you have abjured at baptism. You have renounced the devil, his works, and his pomps. But what are the works of the devil ? Pride, idolatry, luxury, homicide, slander, lying, perjury, hatred, fornication, adultery—in a word, whatever corrupts man. Theft, false witness, gluttony, foul language, quarrelling, using incantations, believing in witches, in werewolves, wearying and turning back from God ; these works and those like them are the devil’s works, and the Apostle says those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But as we hope by God’s mercy that you have renounced all those things in deed as well as intent, it remains for me to remind you, my dearly loved ones, of what you have promised to

Almighty God. Now, in the first place, you have promised to believe in Almighty God, in Jesus Christ the Son, and in the Holy Ghost, One God, but Three in One. And the commandments you have to observe are these: You must love God with all your heart and with all your strength, and your neighbour as yourself. Be patient, merciful, kind, and chaste. Teach your children and servants to fear God. Reunite those who are at enmity; let judges not take presents, which blind the eyes to justice. Keep the Lord's Day, and go to church to pray, not to gossip. Give alms as you are able. If you have feasts, invite the poor, exercise hospitality, visit the sick, succour widows and orphans, give tithes to churches. Do to others as you would like them to do to you. Fear none but God, but fear Him always. Believe in the coming of Christ, in the resurrection of the flesh, in the general judgment."

The practical method and character of his teaching is illustrated by the especial renunciations (of Woden and Freya) which are added to the baptismal formulas. As to the other portion of his work, the bringing into the order and unity of the Church of those who had chosen what

seemed to them better ways of serving God, the history is very complicated. The story of defeated heresies and schisms must have the onesidedness of all history written only by the conquerors. And Pope Zacharias himself seems to have thought that some of the condemnations of Boniface needed reconsidering. Of the two opponents who most perplexed him, Adalbert the Frank is accused of having pretended to a direct revelation from an angel, of having accepted almost Divine honours from his disciples, of having taught wild and mystical things, and in general used his gifts to gain honour for himself, rather than to contribute to the common service.

Against Clement, Boniface's other opponent, a teacher of Irish extraction, no accusations of mysticism or self-exaltation are brought. The controversy in his case seems to have turned on questions of discipline, connected with the marriage of the clergy. Also, Clement was said to have declared that our Lord in His descent into hell redeemed not only the Jewish patriarchs, but heathens and others who had no means of learning of Him in their lifetime.

Whatever may have been Boniface's wisdom as to these minor controversies, in which the

Pope and his devoted Missionary Apostle of Germany seem to have differed, any complete unravelling of the tangled threads is scarcely to be hoped for in these later days. Boniface's acts, as those of Cyprian, doubtless proceeded from the instinct of the shepherd guiding his scattered flock through a wilderness infested by wild beasts—the instinct of unity, the one essential, it might well seem to him, being to keep the flock together.

And, therefore, even to imprison those who would have divided the Christian forces, as he did imprison Adalbert, would doubtless seem to Boniface mercy to him who would have misled, as well as to those who were misled. His new Christians were always first in his heart, his unfledged new converts. For their sakes he even wrote a stormy remonstrance to Pope Zacharias on his encouraging superstition at Rome, by sanctioning amulets, as things that through their old heathen faith still had power over his Germans.

So the fifteen years of ceaseless, fruitful work passed away, until, in 738, Boniface once more made a journey to Rome, to see the face of the new Pope Zacharias. He was welcomed, as a

victorious general would have been welcomed in the old days, who had saved the Republic.

The tidings of his 100,000 Germans won to the Christian Church had preceded him. To create one, who was indeed already the Apostle of the Germans, Archbishop of Maintz, and endue him with the pallium, was merely a recognition of power already wielded, of triumphs already won.

And at this very time (A.D. 738), when Boniface was receiving at Rome the reward of his life-long warfare in the commission to further service, his patron and helper, Charles Martel, was achieving at Chalons that great victory over the Saracens which stemmed the destructive torrent that had ruined the Christians in the East, utterly laid waste the Church of Perpetua and Cyprian, and swept over Spain.

From the heathen masses in the North, and the Moslem hosts of the South and East, Christendom was saved by the different yet co-operative work of the two heroes.

Boniface went back to Germany to carry on the combat for fourteen years more. He founded six new bishoprics, presided at the Councils of Soissons and of Germany; crowned King Pepin

le Bref, son of Charles Martel, first of the Carlovingian Kings at Soissons, and in all things did the work of a great metropolitan bishop. But always in his heart glowed the old missionary fire, always the apostolic passion for the regions beyond; until at seventy-five he obtained permission of the Pope to lay aside his archiepiscopal dignity, and go forth once more, in the Benedictine habit, to the country of his first missionary labours, the northern part of East Friesland. He named an English monk of Malmesbury his successor as archbishop, and wrote a touching letter to the Frankish court chaplain, Fulrad, committing to his care those he left behind. "I beseech his majesty, the King Pepin," he writes, "in the name of Christ the Son of God, that he would design to show me in my lifetime what reward he will hereafter bestow on my scholars, for they are almost entirely strangers" (chiefly, no doubt, his own compatriots). "Some are priests appointed in various places to the service of the Church in the congregation; some monks who are supported in our cells to teach children to read; some old men who have laboured with me long and sustained many. I am anxious on account

of all these, lest after my death they should be scattered as sheep that have no shepherd, and lest the people who dwell on the borders of the heathen should lose their Christianity again. The clergy on the frontier of the heathen had a wretched life. Bread to eat they can obtain, but clothes they cannot, if they do not get advice and support from other quarters, as they have from me, that they might be able to remain in such places, in the service of the people." King Pepin granted his request. And then once more girding around him his Benedictine habit, he went forth with a little missionary company of eight, one a bishop, three deacons, and some monks. Among them was Gregory, who had followed him since boyhood from his grandmother's monastery on the Moselle.

He took with him one book-chest containing the Holy Gospels, St. Ambrose's *De Bono Mortis* (on the Gain of Death), a book he loved much, and also an altar-cloth and a shroud; the martyr's death being always a possibility for which he was prepared.

When he arrived in Friesland all at first seemed to go well. He baptized many new converts, and reclaimed some who had relapsed

into heathenism since the death of his old friend Archbishop Willibrord. On Whit Sunday he pitched his tent in an open field near Dockum, on the river Burda, and erected an altar. There he awaited the arrival of the newly baptized, on whom he was to lay his hands in confirmation. He was waiting quietly in his tent at prayer, when instead of the Christian converts he expected, a swarm of fierce heathen, armed and shouting for battle, appeared on the plain. They rushed to the tent of Boniface. His friends and attendants would have fought in his defence. But he would not suffer any resistance to be made. "We are to render good for evil," he said; "and as for me, this is the day that I have long waited for. The hour of my deliverance is come."

Then he went forth from his tent, surrounded by his clergy, encouraging them not to fear the brief passage before them into the celestial kingdom and the "City of the Angels."

In an instant the fierce band of the heathen overwhelmed and slew him, and many others with him.

The Devonshire man who, seventy years ago, had listened as a boy of five to the Gospel story

from the monks in his father's house near Crediton, now lay, at last, in his grey hairs, slain by those he had spent his life in serving. They knew not what they did. When he was dead they rushed into the tent for the booty they had expected of gold and silver vessels and precious vestments; but they found only a few books, a little wine for the Sacrament, and a few sacred relics, and enraged at their disappointment they turned against each other. It is said that Boniface died with a book of the Gospels in his hand, and that it was pierced with a sword and stained with his blood, but that not a letter of the sacred text was injured.

His body was wrapped in the shroud he had laid among his books, and was taken first to Maestricht, where Bishop Lambert had died for purity and righteousness a century before; and then it was borne, finally, to his beloved Abbey of Fulda, the English Apostle of Germany resting among his Saxons. And there was laid, in time, his cousin, the English Abbess, St. Lioba, after she had faithfully carried on his work for twenty years, dying at a great age, the friend of high and low, of the suffering, the aged, and the little children. Side by side the noble Devonshire

man and woman were laid to rest in the Saxon land they had helped to win for Christ.¹

Neander calls St. Boniface, Father of the German Church and civilization.

Through Boniface no doubt was accomplished the consolidation between the Empire and the Church, gathering Western Christendom into the Roman obedience, and so securing the unity which kept at bay the barbarous tribes of the North until these also were incorporated into the Church,—and also drove back the two successive floods of Mohammedan Conquest: the Saracenic through Africa and Spain by the defeat at Treves;

¹ Sir James Stephen says (*Ecclesiastical Biography*, p. 481) —“His copy of Ambrose’s *De Bono Mortis*, covered with his blood, was exhibited during many succeeding centuries at Fulda as a relic. It was contemplated there by many who regarded as superstitious and heretical some of the tenets of Boniface. But no Christian, whatever be his own peculiar creed, ever looked on this blood-stained memorial of him without the profoundest emotion. For, since the Apostolic Age, no greater benefactor of our race has come among us than this monk of Nutcell, unless it be the Monk of Wittenberg, who at the distance of seven centuries appeared to reform and reconstruct the Churches founded by the holy Benedictine. To Boniface the heart of Germany and Holland still looks back as their spiritual progenitor, nor did any uninspired man ever add to the permanent dominion of the Gospel provinces of such extent and such value.”

the Turkish through Hungary by the check at Vienna.

From Boniface's Saxony in after years came also Luther's *Deutsche Bibel für das Deutsche Volk*, which did so much to create both the German language and the German people.

And in ages again long after that, when the old fervour such as we have been watching in early days for Missions to the heathen, once more awoke in England, from the Germany which our great Devonshire Missionary and so many of his kindred helped to civilize and Christianize, came back to us, let us gratefully acknowledge, simple and noble Missionaries, men and women, such as Schwarz and Krapf, and the Moravians, to bear for us and help us bear the glad tidings to India, Africa, Greenland, and Australia.

From France to Ireland, from Ireland to Scotland, from Scotland to England, from Ireland and England to France and Germany, from Germany back again to England, and from England on to India, Africa, and the Pacific Islands, East and West and South and North—so the golden chain, the electric current, completes itself.

The same paragraph, the third portion of the Apostles' Creed, contains the words, "I believe in

the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints." But always the Confession of our faith about the Holy Catholic Church is preceded and pervaded by the Confession, "I believe in the Holy Ghost;" and therefore always it culminates and is crowned in the Confession of the Communion of Saints: the Church Visible because Luminous, Luminous by the fire of self-sacrificing love ever burning in the hearts of her Saints.

ST. MARGARET, QUEEN OF
SCOTLAND.



ST. MARGARET, QUEEN OF SCOTLAND.

I.

THREE centuries passed between the death of Boniface and the death of Margaret, Queen and Saint. Boniface was martyred at what is now Dorcum, by the heathen of Holland, in 781. Margaret died in the royal castle of Edinburgh in 1093.

In the interval, the monasteries of Iona, and the Holy Island of Lindisfarne, and Bede's Jarrow, had been plundered and ruined. During two centuries, the tide of invasion and piracy from the North had been sweeping over Europe.

The Celtic saints had long passed away. The controversies about Easter were in the distant past; but the England, Ireland, Scotland, France, Switzerland, their fervent Missions had helped so largely to Christianize, never lapsed again into utter heathenism.

Again and again it must have seemed as if the

ground won might have been lost again, but it never was.

The libraries of Bede, the schools of the great Archbishop Theodore, had indeed vanished. But the books of Bede, the English literature by whose cradle the royal Abbess Hilda had watched, the poems the cowherd Cædmon, by her encouragement, had sung, the English tongue of Bede and Cædmon remained.

The century after Boniface had been a century of fighting for life, for England and for the Christianity of England. But another king, saintly as the Northumbrian Oswald, though not in any calendar, had beaten back the Dane, and begun finally to make England one.

In picturing him, the historian pictures a noble ideal of the English character. "Alfred was the noblest, the most complete embodiment of all that is great, all that is lovable in the English character. He combined as no other man has ever combined, its practical energy, its patient and enduring force, its profound sense of duty, the reserve and control that steadies in it a wide outlook and a restless daring, its temperance and fairness, its frank geniality, its sensitiveness to affection, its poetic tenderness,

its deep and passionate religion. Religion was indeed the groundwork of Alfred's character. His temper was instinct with piety. Everywhere through his writings that remain to us, the name of God, the thought of God, stirs him to outbursts of ecstatic adoration. But he was no mere Saint" (as surely no great Saint ever was). "He felt none of that scorn of the world about him which drove the noble souls of his day to monastery or hermitage. Vexed as he was by sickness and constant pain, his temper took no touch of asceticism. His rare geniality, a peculiar elasticity and mobility of nature, gave colour and charm to his life."¹

Yet the true asceticism was there, the enduring hardness, the "fighting not as one that beateth the air," the "bringing the body into subjection." His life was as much by rule, hour by hour, as Columba's or Columban's, not an hour idle. "So long as I have lived," he said when dying, "I have striven to live worthily."

Alfred, "Truth-teller" and king: and founder also of monasteries at Winchester and in Athelney.

When looking back on the work of the men before him, Aidan and Bede and Theodore,

¹ Green's *History of the English People*, i. 75.

thinking probably how Alcuin came to learn at the English school of Latin and Greek and all known learning at York, he mourned to see how "formerly strangers came hither to learn, and now we have to go to seek instruction in foreign lands."

But most of all, as English king, he grieved to think how what little learning lingered was withering into the mere accomplishment of the learned or the privilege of the priesthood.

"When I began to reign," he said, "I cannot remember one priest south of the Thames who could render the service-book into English."

It was the people he cared for; and into the common tongue he translated Bede, as Bede had translated the Gospel of St. John, finishing the last verse as he was dying.

Alfred turned the tide for us. But there were many ebbs and flows afterwards. In the century which followed, the struggle of the shaping into one of England still went on. In that century another great statesman and churchman arose. He was a successor indeed of Wilfrid rather than of Aidan and Cuthbert, and the future saints of Ireland and Iona. Yet it is interesting to remember that at Glastonbury he

touched the scholarly and artistic saints of Ireland, studying with passionate earnestness the books they left there, and carrying about with him through life the harp he learned there to use. Dunstan helped to unite the English kingdoms into one, for the grandson of Alfred. And Canute, who came to us a pirate, remained to rule us as a king and a Christian, and also to unite the land.

But yet another flood was to burst over the English land, also to make its ruins, and to leave its imperishable deposits of new soil. And to the people who lived through it, that time may well have seemed the darkest of all.

Again, it was a Norseman who made the Conquest, but this time Norseman polished linguistically into Norman, which to Saxon, English, men must have seemed most hopeless of all. For the first time since the Britons were driven into the mountains, it must have seemed to the people as if the English mother tongue was to be banished, left to be the mere dialect of peasants and serfs.

No more translating books into that common tongue by the King. The new Norman King had other things to do. The common tongue

was to him indeed,—and might it not become to all?—in the lowest sense, the “vulgar” tongue. The Norman language in the Castle on the hill-top. The Norman Prelate on the episcopal throne, the Norman King on Alfred and Edward the Confessor’s throne; what but the absolutism of foreign domination and slavery could come of it? What *did* come of it, we know, was England: the English nobles welded into the great English middle class—free-spoken and cultured—creating the material for the English Parliament, the middle-class of squire and merchant and clerk and yeoman allied to the peasantry and to the “common people” by one blood and language; so that freedom “broadened down” from class to class, from age to age.

But no one in those dreadful days of the Norman Conquest could foresee that; any more than Colman could foresee the Danes, or Alfred and Columban Mohammed and Charles Martel and Tours. From South to North the English people were being massacred and enslaved, the English land was turned into forest and wilderness;—the English towns were being sacked and burnt by William the Conqueror, from the New Forest to desolated Yorkshire. The misery was

scarcely to be paralleled in those times of so many successive waves of destruction. Iona and Lindisfarne had long vanished: Peterborough, Crowland, and Ely had long been plundered and burned by the Norsemen from Denmark.

But this Norseman arrived not as a pirate who ravaged, burnt, and went away; but as a Conqueror, who ruined, and massacred, and remained, to see that the crushed enemy did not rise again. For half a century the sixty miles he ravaged north of York remained a wilderness; and to make the ruin seem, if possible, more entirely unremediable, from Scotland, from the land of Aidan, in the North, came another raid of the Scottish king, Malcolm Canmore, "killing the old like swine for a banquet," driving the young, especially the women and children, northwards, whether they died of fatigue by the way or not (like the slaves along the path of death to the African coast), till there was scarcely a village or farm in Scotland which did not hold in bondage one of those fair English St. Gregory had so admired and laboured to save.

It was out of such wreck and storm as this our England grew. And it was in the midst

of such wreck and storm that Margaret, sister of Edgar Atheling, of Alfred's race, grew to be a Saint. It is like the story of Ruth, the flower of a sweet life, of a holy, loving home, blossoming amidst the barbaric struggles of the Book of Judges. And it happens that this story of hers is given as scarcely any other life in those far-off times, by her friend and confessor Turgot (or Theodoric as the name is differently rendered), the woman herself, no mere shadowy ideal of what she *might have been*, but naturally, simply, fully what she *was*: mother, queen, and saint, by being all these in their truest meaning.

II.

PROPYLÆUM AD VITAM.

THIS is the name given in the *Acta Sanctorum* by the Bollandists to the story of St. Margaret's ancestors, as a preface to her own life. It is taken, they say, "from Aelred, Abbot of Rievaulx, and others": Propylæum: portico and entrance to a temple.

"Edgar, being translated to the heavenly kingdom, was succeeded by Edward, to whom succeeded his brother Ethelred, who having sent ambassadors to Normandy, asked and received the hand of Emma, the daughter of Richard Duke of Normandy. By her he had two sons, Edward and Alfred." He had already another son by his previous marriage with the daughter of Earl Toreth, Edmund called Ironside, who succeeded him on the throne.

During Edmund's reign, "Cnuth the Dane" (Canute) invaded England, and the wars between Canute and Edmund were ended by a treaty

dividing the kingdom between them. Edmund died two months after this treaty was made. Canute then claimed possession of the whole, marrying Emma the widow of Ethelred, Edmund's father. Edward, afterwards called the Confessor, Edmund's brother, and Ethelred's son, lived after this in exile in Normandy.

There were two younger children of Ethelred by the Norman Queen Emma, "Canute, fearing, himself, to injure them, sent to the King of Sweden, to be put out of the way (*interficiendos*). But the Swedish king took pity on the helpless little ones, and sent them on to Stephen the Saint, and King of Hungary. St. Stephen received them graciously, more graciously brought them up, and most graciously of all adopted them. He married Edward, the son who lived, to his niece Agatha, of the Saxon Imperial Family of Germany." The children of this marriage were three, Edgar the Atheling, Christina who became an Abbess, and St. Margaret. Thus St. Margaret's father was brought up at the Court and in the home of St. Stephen, who brought Hungary from Paganism to Christianity, and into close connection with the See of Rome, from which he received the famous Hungarian Crown; pro-

bably the most religious and cultivated Court then in Europe.

After the death of Canute and his sons, and the accession of Edward the Confessor, at King Edward's request, the Emperor of Germany (King Stephen having died) sent the English Edward with his wife Agatha, and his three children, "with great glory and riches, and all that a king could wish," to England. There, these last scions of King Alfred's line were received with enthusiasm by the English people. But from some cause unexplained—court intrigue or what else—they never saw Edward the Confessor. In a few days after their landing in England, Edward the father died, and "the joy of the English was turned into mourning, and their laughter into tears." Soon, the Confessor also died. Then followed the claim on the English throne by William Duke of Normandy; the young Atheling Edgar with his sisters and their German mother being thus left helpless and forlorn. They took ship to return to Hungary, the land of their birth. But a tempest arose, and drove the ship towards Scotland, where, after being much tossed about by the waves, they landed at length in the Frith of Forth.

Meantime, Malcolm Cænmore, King of the Scots, had been on an expedition into the North of England, laying Cumberland waste, and Teviotdale and St. Cuthbert's country. From this he had only just returned. At his palace at Dunfermline, on the north of the Frith of Forth, he heard of the arrival of the royal strangers, and hastened to greet them in their ship, remembering the kindness he had himself received from Edward the Confessor during his own years of exile in England. Edgar the Atheling, when he heard Malcolm had come, went with his mother and sisters to meet him, in as great state and royal splendour as they could. In a few days, captivated by the grace, the noble manner, and the goodness of Margaret, Malcolm sought her from her mother in marriage. Agatha did not refuse, "thinking there were not easily to be found a husband more equal to her daughter." And so the young princess and the soldierly, chivalrous King, in the prime of his years, were married in the week after Easter. And, soon after, the fair English bride Margaret was crowned Queen of the Scots.

"William the Norman, hearing of these things, and knowing how many were still in England

loyal in heart to the Atheling, proscribed all Edgar's friends, so that a great number of Englishmen of high degree fled to Malcolm,¹ and brought many precious ornaments and vessels to Edgar, carefully concealed, gold and silver, and relics and reliquaries, and among the rest the Black Cross, so dear to Margaret to her dying hour, and to enshrine which her son David built in Lothian the church of the Holy Rood.

What that marriage meant for Scotland may be seen in the pages of her friend and confessor, where the appreciation of the chivalrous, half-protective, half-adoring tenderness of the King, his playful acquiescence in her "rapine" from his alms-bag, the humour and naturalness and tender-heartedness of the King and the Queen, and also of the priest, who is the biographer, sparkle out so delightfully through all the elaborate antitheses and religious laudations and courtly phrases.

The children of Margaret did indeed tread in her steps. Probably the good monk, Turgot or Theodore, was able to fulfil effectually his last promise to her to be a faithful friend to them.

¹ From these refugees some of the most ancient historic families in Scotland trace their descent.

Three of the sons reigned; the youngest, David, seems to have been like her in devotion and loving humility. His benefactions to the Church, as was said, made him "a sair king for the croun."

When himself dying, he insisted on being taken from his bed to do honour to the Blessed Sacrament, himself responding with fervent devotion from feeble trembling lips. "In great devotion and tranquillity he lived that day and passed the night, and in the morning of the Sunday preceding Ascension Day, just as the dawning sun scattered the darkness of night, he himself passed from the darkness of the body into the true joys of the light, so tranquilly, that he seemed, like his mother, not dead but asleep, his hands clasped to the last in devotion:" St. David the King, son of St. Margaret the Queen.

There is a touching little story about King David, which lets in some light on the days when he was comparatively a thoughtless boy; especially interesting, because it gives us a glimpse into the life of his sister Matilda, for whom their mother's life was written, the Queen of Henry the First of England.

The narrator of the incident says he received

it "from the mouth of the never-to-be-forgotten King David," who became such a friend to the poor.

"When," said David, "I was a youth, serving in the royal court in England, one night when I was doing I know not what with my companions, I was called to the chamber of the Queen (his sister Mathilda). And behold the house was full of lepers, and the Queen standing in the midst. Her royal robes laid aside, she was clothed in linen, and taking a bason of water, she began to wash their feet and to wipe them, and then to press them with both her hands and devoutly to kiss them. I said to her, 'What dost thou, O lady mine? Surely if the King knew this, never would he kiss thy lips polluted by the feet of lepers.'

"Then she, smiling gently, said, 'Who does not know that the feet of the King eternal are to be preferred to the lips of a mortal king? For this reason, dearest brother, I called thee, that by my example thou shouldst learn to do likewise. Take the bason, and do what you see me do.' At that word I was violently alarmed, and I exclaimed that by no means would I suffer such a thing; for I did not indeed know her Lord, nor was His Spirit revealed to me. She going

on with what she had begun, I, (*mea culpa!*) laughing, returned to my companions.”

Of this King David, in his later years, we are told by one who knew him, how full of graciousness and kindness he was, rejoicing with those who rejoiced, weeping with those who wept. “I have seen him with my eyes, equipped for hunting, with his foot in the stirrup, at the voice of a poor man withdraw his foot, re-enter the palace, and giving up his purpose, patiently and kindly listen to the cause for which he was appealed to. It was his custom also to sit at the gate of his palace, to hear carefully the causes of poor and aged people who came from various regions, and endeavour with much labour to satisfy them. For often they would contest the matter with him, and he with them; for he would not, contrary to justice, accept the person of the poor, and they would not always accept the reasons he gave. In short, if it happened that any priest, or soldier, or monk, rich or poor, citizen or stranger, had speech with him, so to the purpose and so humbly would he discuss their business and duties with all, that each thought himself his especial care, and so all went away pleased and edified.”

This story of her son may certainly be taken as belonging to the Propylæum of St. Margaret's life as well as that of her forefathers: a porch and entrance to what was indeed a Temple.

Her life itself seems best rendered in the words of her friend and biographer, taking us naturally and altogether, without explanation or comment, into the atmosphere she breathed, and speaking in the language she used.

III.

THE LIFE¹ OF ST. MARGARET, QUEEN
OF SCOTLAND.

THE AUTHOR BEING THEODORIC, A MONK OF DURHAM, CONFESSOR OF THE SAINT HERSELF, TO HER DAUGHTER MATHILDA, QUEEN OF ENGLAND (WIFE OF KING HENRY I.).

PROLOGUE.

To the excellently honourable and honourably excellent Mathilda, Queen of the English, Theodoric, a servant of the servants of St. Cuthbert; in this present life the good of peace and health; and in the future the supreme good of all good.

I. The life, the daily living (*conversatio*) of your mother of venerable memory, that life so well-pleasing to God, which you have heard proclaimed by the concordant praise of many, you by requesting have commanded, and in commanding have requested, that I should offer to you in writing.

¹ Translated from the Latin of Theodoric in the *Acta Sanctorum*.

You have indeed said that I am most to be trusted in this, because you have heard that I was in great part acquainted with her secrets, thanks to her great intimacy with me.

These commands and these wishes I willingly embrace; embracing, I greatly venerate; venerating, I congratulate you, who being by the King of the Angels made Queen of the Angles, desire not only to hear the life of your Queen Mother, who was always panting for the kingdom of the Angels, but to be able to gaze into it continually, expressed in writing, so that having known but little the face of your mother, you might yet have full knowledge of her virtues.

And indeed my will is well inclined to accomplish this; but I confess capacity is lacking; the material is greater than my power of speaking or writing.

2. Thus I suffer in two ways, so that I am drawn hither and thither on account of the greatness of the thing. I fear to obey; yet on account of the authority of her who commands, and my own memory of what is to be said, I dare not refuse. But although I am not worthy to unfold so great a subject, yet as much as I can I am bound to tell; for this my own delight in it,

and your command exact. For the grace of the Holy Spirit, which gave to her such efficacy of virtues, to me also, I hope, will minister help in narrating them; and again it is written, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." Neither can one fail in word who believes in the word: "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God.*"

And firstly therefore I wish you, and others through you, to know, that if I were to try to proclaim all that I know of her, I might seem to be speaking with adulation in praise of your mother on account of her royal dignity. But far be it from me, a grey-haired man, to mar the virtues of such a woman by falsehood; for in setting this forth, God being my Witness and Judge, I propose to add nothing to that which is; on the contrary, I must suppress many things in silence, lest they should seem incredible; lest (as the Orator says) I should seem to be adorning the crow with the colour of the swan.

CHAPTER I.

THE NOBILITY OF HER RACE ; HER ROYAL AND MATRONLY VIRTUES.

3. WE read that many have drawn their name from the quality of their mind ; so that in them, what they were called corresponded to the grace they had received. So Peter from the Rock (Petra) by Christ, on account of the firmness of his faith ; so John (which is “ the grace of God ”), because of his contemplation of the Divinity, and participation in the Divine love ; and the sons of Zebedee are called Boanerges, *i. e.* sons of thunder, on account of the thunder of their Evangelical preaching. This also is found in this virtuous woman ; for the grace of her name was surpassed by the beauty of her soul. Margaret she was called, and she in the sight of God in faith and deed was indeed a precious Margareta and Pearl. And so your Pearl and Margareta, and mine and ours, and above all Christ’s (and because Christ’s, all the more ours), has left us now, and is taken up to God. This pearl, I say, has been taken up from the dung-hill of this world, and shines now among the jewels of the Eternal King. Which indeed no

one will doubt when he shall in a little while have heard her life, and the close of her life. Whose converse with me, seasoned indeed with salt, when I recall, when I consider her tears wrung from the compunction of her heart; when I think of the soberness and composedness of her ways; when I remember her graciousness and wisdom, mourning, I rejoice; and rejoicing, I mourn. I rejoice, because she has gone to God for whom she longed; I mourn, because I am not rejoicing with her in the heavenly places. For her, I say, I rejoice, because what she believed, she now sees, "the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living"; for myself I mourn, because in this land of the dead, while I suffer the miseries of mortal life, I am daily constrained to say, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

4. Since then I have to speak of that nobility of mind which was hers in Christ, something must first be told of the nobility with which she shone according to this world. She had for her grandfather one who, in that he fought strenuously and invincibly against his enemies, obtained the distinguished title of Ironside. His brother, her uncle, on the father's not on the

mother's side, was the most gentle and pious Eadward, who showed himself the father of his country—another Solomon—(which is, being interpreted, Pacific); rather by peace than by arms he protected the kingdom. For he bore a mind victorious over anger, despising avarice, destitute of pride. Neither is this to be wondered at; since from his ancestors he received as by hereditary right not only the glory of high place, but of an honourable life. He was descended from Eadgar, King of the English, and Richard Count of the Normans, both not only most noble but most religious men. Of these two, Eadgar, of what weight he was in the world, and of what value in Christ may be briefly stated. King of righteousness and lover of justice, it was pretokened he was to be. For at his birth the blessed Dunstan heard the holy angels rejoicing in heaven, and singing with great joy—"Peace and gladness to the Church of the English as long as this boy shall hold the kingdom, and Dunstan with him shall tread the way of mortal life."

5. Richard also, the father of Eadward's mother Emma, shone worthy of such a grandson, a man earnest in all things, and to be

praised with all praise. For none of his ancestors were ever more prosperous in the secular dignity, or more fervent in the love of religion. Placed in possession of great riches, he was poor in spirit, as another David; appointed Lord of the people, he was the lowliest servant of the servants of Christ. Among other things which he left as memorials of his religion, this devoted worshipper of Christ built the noble monastery of Fécamp; in which he, a secular in dress, but a monk in act, used often to converse with the monks, and silently to place their food and drink before them, serving them at meals; that, according to the Scriptures, being greatest, he might humble himself to be the least. Whose works of magnificence and virtue, if any one wishes to know more fully, let him read the *Gesta Normannorum*, which contains his Acts. From ancestors of such distinction and excellence Eadward their grandson nowise degenerated. As said before, he was the son of the brother of Eadward the King, of whose son Margaret was the daughter, by the brightness of her merits adorning still more this bright row of her ancestors.

6. Whilst still in the first bloom of her years,

she began to lead a sober and earnest life, to love God above all things, to occupy herself with the study of Divine Readings, and with delight to exercise her mind on them. There was inborn in her, an acute subtlety of intelligence to understand, much tenacity of memory to retain, and a gracious facility of words to express what she knew.

Whilst therefore she meditated day and night in the law of the Lord, sitting like another Mary at the feet of the Lord, and delighting to hear His words,—by the will of her kindred rather than by her own, yet truly by the appointment of God, she was united in marriage to Malcolm, the most potent King of Scotland, son of King Duncan.¹ But although she was compelled to

¹ “It was a good day indeed for Malcolm and for Scotland when Margaret was persuaded or constrained to exchange the easy self-dedication of the cloister for the harder task of doing her duty in that state of life to which it pleased God to call her. Margaret became the mirror of wives, mothers, and Queens, and none ever more worthily earned the honours of Saintship. Her gentle influence reformed whatever needed to be reformed in her husband, and none laboured more diligently for the advance of all temporal and spiritual enlightenment in her adopted country. The wife of Malcolm played a part not wholly unlike the part played by the earlier wives of Æthelberht and Eadwine. There was indeed no need for Margaret to bring a new

have to do with the things of the world, in her heart she despised them; she delighted more in a good work than in the possession of riches. With these things temporal she prepared for herself eternal rewards; since she set her heart where her treasure was—in heaven. And because she sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, by the large grace of the Omnipotent, honours and riches were added unto her. She did all things which became a wise Queen; by her counsel the rights of the kingdom were ordered; by her industry the Divine religion spread, and the people were glad in the prosperity of the land. Nothing firmer than her faith, more constant than her countenance, more tolerant than her patience, more just than her judgment, more pleasant than her converse.

7. When therefore she had attained the

religion into Scotland, but she gave a new life to the religion which she found existing there.

“It was through Margaret that the old kingly blood of England passed into the veins of the descendants of the Conqueror; it was in her daughter, the heiress of her virtues, that ‘the green tree began to return to its place.’ The life of Margaret by Turgot (or Theodoric) is one of the most interesting pieces that we have as a personal and ecclesiastical biography.”—Freeman, *Norman Conquest*, iv. 510.

summit of dignity, she soon erected in the place where her nuptials were celebrated (Dunfermline) an eternal monument of her name and her piety. She built there a church in honour of the Holy Trinity, with a threefold intention; for the redemption of the soul of the King and of her own, and to obtain for their children and descendants prosperity in this life and in the life to come. Which church she decorated with various kinds of ornaments; amongst which are known to have been not a few vessels of pure and solid gold for the sacred ministry of the altar; which I know the more surely, because by the command of the Queen I had the charge of them all for a long time. The Cross also, of incomparable value, having the Image of the Saviour, which she had also covered with purest gold and silver mingled with precious gems, showing to those who behold it to-day the devotion of her faith.

In other churches also she left signs of her sacred devotion and faith, as witnesseth the Church of St. Andrews, where to this day can be seen that most beautiful image of the Crucified, which she herself had there lifted up. Of these things which belong to the worship of the

Divine service her chamber was never empty; it seemed, if I may say so, to be a workshop of Divine art. There were always to be seen copes for the choir, stoles, palls for the altar, and other sacerdotal vestments and ornaments of the church. Some were being prepared by the hands of the artificers; some, already finished, were had in admiration.

8. These works were given to women of noble birth and honourable life, such as were thought worthy of being in the household of the Queen. No man was admitted, except such as she permitted, to enter with herself when she went to pay them a visit. No light familiarity, no petulant levity was ever allowed. In the Queen there was such strictness blended with her sweetness, such pleasantness with her severity, that all in her service, men and women, loved while they feared her, and feared while they loved. So that in her presence not only could nothing blamable be done, but no one would have dared to use a low word. Repressing all faults in herself, there was great gravity in her gladness, and dignity in her anger; never abandoned to wild laughter, nor excited to anything like rage. For, whilst indeed she would be indignant with

the faults of others, and her own, her anger was always the friend of justice, according to the precept of the Psalmist—*Be ye angry and sin not*. All her life, composed by supreme moderation of wisdom, was in itself a mould of virtues. Her speech was full of the salt of wisdom, her silence of good thoughts. So closely did the gentleness and repose of her manners fit her, one could only think they were born with her. To say much in a few words, in all that she said, in all that she did, she showed that the thoughts of her heart were heavenly.

9. Not less than for herself was her care for her children; that indeed they might be brought up with all diligence, and taught; and, above all, trained in virtuous ways. And as she knew it was written, “Who spares the rod, spoils the child,” she insisted on their attendants correcting their infant naughtinesses with severe words, and if necessary with whippings; through which earnest care of their mother for the little ones, their manners were often far better than those of older people; and they were always kind and peaceful with each other, and the younger ready to yield to the older. So that when they accompanied their parents to Mass, and, after their parents, went (up

to the chancel) with their offerings, the younger never thought of going before the elder, but all kept to the order of their ages. And often she would call them to her, and teach them of Christ and the things of Christ, as far as their age would permit, and diligently she sought to admonish them to honour Him. "Fear the Lord, my children," she would say, "for there is no want to those that fear Him; and if you love Him, my dear hearts, He will give you prosperity in this life, and eternal joy with all His Saints." These were the desires of your mother, this her teaching, these her prayers night and day for her offspring, with many tears, that they might know their Creator in the faith which worketh by love, and knowing might worship Him, and worshipping might love Him in all and above all, and loving Him might attain to the glory of the Heavenly Kingdom.

CHAPTER II.

THE CARE OF MARGARET FOR THE HONOUR OF THE KINGDOM,
AND FOR ECCLESIASTICAL DISCIPLINE, THAT ABUSES
SHOULD BE CORRECTED.

10. NOR is it to be wondered at that the Queen should order herself and hers with wise rule, who herself was always ruled by the most wise teaching of the Sacred Scriptures.

For, what I used to admire greatly in her, was how, amidst the distractions of legal decisions, amidst the multitudinous cares of the kingdom, with a wonderful eagerness she gave herself to the Sacred Reading, conferring with the most learned and able men, and often asking them acute questions. But among them all, as there was none with a profounder intellect than her own, so no one could ever speak more clearly. Thus it often happened that those teachers went away much wiser than they came. Indeed her avidity for the Sacred Volumes was not small, and many a time her kindness and gracious intimacy compelled me to weary myself in procuring them for her. For in these things it was not only her own good, but the good of others that she sought, and before all the good

of the King himself; and, God working with her, she made him also most earnest in justice, mercy, almsgiving, and all other good works. From her he learnt also to keep vigils and prayers at night; by her exhortation and example he learned to pray to God with true groanings of the heart and abundance of tears. I wondered, I confess, at this great miracle of God's mercy, when I saw such a purpose of prayer in the King, such compunction in the heart of a man living in the world, whenever he prayed.

11. This Queen of his—of a life so to be venerated, in whose heart he could see that Christ did indeed dwell—he truly dreaded to grieve; but on the contrary, he set himself in all things to fulfil her wishes and her wise counsels.

The things she rejected, he rejected also; and the things she loved, he loved for the love of her. So, the very books from which she was accustomed to pray or to read, he, being ignorant of letters, used to turn over with his hands, and gaze into; and when he heard from her that any one was especially dear to her, he also would hold it dearer than others, and kiss it, and often fold it in his hands. Sometimes he would call a worker in gold, and order him to adorn that

manuscript with gold and gems; and thus elaborately ornamented, the King himself would bring it back to the Queen as a token of his devotion to her. Whilst she herself, meanwhile, this most noble gem of royal race, made far more magnificent the magnificence of the King's glory; and herself added glory and beauty to all the nobles of the kingdom and their households. For she caused that merchants coming from diverse regions by sea and land, brought many and costly kinds of goods for sale which hitherto had been unknown in that country, among which were garments of diverse colours and various ornaments of dress, which, the Queen constraining them, the natives bought, so that at her request clothes of various fashions began to be worn, and the grace and beauty of them made the wearers look like new men. She also instituted more stately service and attendance for the King, so that wherever he went, walking or on horseback, a large company with great pomp accompanied him; and this also with so much discipline, that wherever they came, none of them were allowed to take anything by force from any one, nor were any of them suffered in any way to oppress or injure the country people

or the poor. Also the decorations of the royal palaces were multiplied, and the whole house not only was bright with the many coloured dresses of the inmates, but also was resplendent with silver and gold. For the vessels on which the food and drink were served at table to the King and the nobles were gold and silver, or at least plated with silver and gold.

12. And this indeed she did, not because she delighted in worldly honour, but because she set her mind to carry out all that her royal state required of her. For whilst she moved about clothed as became a Queen with costly raiment, like another Esther, in her mind she trampled over all these pomps, and never considered herself, underneath the gems and gold, as anything but dust and ashes. In a word, in all this height of dignity, it was always her greatest care to preserve humility. And much the more easily did she repress any inflation of pride from worldly glory, because the transitory condition of this fragile life never was absent from her mind. For she ever was mindful of the sentence in which the unstable state of human life is described. Thus, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of many miseries: he cometh up like a

flower and is cut down, and fleeth like a shadow, and never continueth long in one stay." She was ever turning over in her mind what the Apostle James saith, "What is our life? It is even a vapour, which appeareth for a little season, and then vanisheth away." And because, as the Scripture says, "Blessed is the man who feareth alway," so much the more easily did this venerable Queen avoid sin, inasmuch as with fear and trembling she ever kept before the eyes of her mind the severe day of judgment. Wherefore she often entreated me, that if I saw anything to be reprov'd in her, in word or deed, I would not hesitate to point it out to her privately. Which if I did it more seldom or less severely than she wished, she would earnestly press on me, and would argue that I was lukewarm or negligent: "Let the righteous reprove me friendly, and smite me; the ointments of the wicked shall not anoint my head; better are the wounds of a friend than the kisses of a flattering enemy." By this she meant, that blame of herself, which another might resist as a shame, she craved for, to perfect her in virtue.

13. Thus this religious Queen, worthy of her God, whilst with mind and words and deeds she

pressed forward to the heavenly country, was also ever inviting others to go on with her in that immaculate life, that with her they might together reach the true beatitude. When she saw a bad man, she admonished him that he might become good; a good man, that he might become better; the better that he should strive to be best. Truly Apostolic in her faith, the zeal of the House of God, which is the Church, devoured her; so that whatever unlawful things sprang up there she sought to root out. When then she saw that many things were done among that people against the rule of the right faith and the holy custom of the Universal Church, she instituted frequent Councils to bring back the erring to the way of truth. Of which Councils the principal was one in which she alone, with a few of her friends, contended against the perverse assertors of custom for three days, with the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. You might have thought you saw a second Helena; for as that Empress of old convinced the Jews by sentences from the Scriptures, similarly now this Queen convinced those who were in error. But in this conflict the King assisted as Assessor and Principal, whatever she commanded

in this cause, most ready to say or do. For as he understood the language of the English as well as his own, he was able to interpret between each party.

14. Therefore the Queen, after saying by way of introduction, that those who serve God in one Faith in the Catholic Church, must not diverge from that Church into new and foreign institutions, then first set forth that those did not keep the Lenten fast lawfully, who instead of following the custom of the Holy Church of beginning the fast on Ash Wednesday, begin it on the Monday of the following week. The objectors replied: "We keep the fast by the authority of the Gospel, which says that Christ fasted six weeks." But she said: "Far do you depart in this from the Gospel; for it says the Lord fasted forty days, which it is clear you do not. For if you subtract six Sundays through six weeks from the fast, it is obvious that only thirty-six days are left for the fast. You do not then according to the authority of the Gospel observe forty days, but thirty-six. It remains therefore that if you wish by the example of the Lord to fast forty days, you must begin four days before Quadragesima; but, on the contrary, in opposition to the authority

of the Lord Himself, and of the whole Holy Church, you alone reject the tradition." Therefore they, being convinced by the clear reason of the truth, thenceforward began the fast at the same time with the rest of the Church.

15. The Queen then proposed another thing: she desired that they should show for what reason they neglected to receive the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ on Easter Day, according to the custom of the Holy Apostolic Church. They replied, "The Apostle speaking of these things says, 'Whosoever eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself.' Now, since we acknowledge ourselves to be sinners, we dread to approach that mystery."¹ To whom the Queen said, "What then? Are all who are sinners not to taste the holy mystery? Then no one could receive it, for none is without the stain of sin, not even the child of one day's life upon the earth. If then no one may partake, why does the Gospel cry through the lips of the Lord Himself,

¹ It is interesting to observe in this the persistency of the national characteristics. Those who are familiar with the Highlands of Scotland, will see in the difficulties St. Margaret sought to meet the difficulties of many a Highland parish to-day.

‘Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you’? But clearly it is necessary, that according to the interpretation of the Fathers ye should otherwise understand that sentence of the Apostle. He does not deem that all who are sinners take unworthily the Sacraments of Salvation. For when he says, ‘he eateth and drinketh judgment to himself,’ he adds, ‘not discerning the body of the Lord’ (that is, not separating it in faith from bodily food), ‘he eateth and drinketh judgment to himself.’ But he who without confession and penitence, with the pollutions of his iniquities upon him, should presume to approach the sacred mysteries, he indeed, I say, does eat and drink judgment to himself. But we who having many days before made confession of our sins, are chastened with penance, are lowered by fasting, are washed from the stain of our sins through almsgiving and tears,—on the Day of the Resurrection of the Lord, approaching His table in the Catholic faith, receive the flesh and blood of the spotless Lamb, Jesus Christ, not to the judgment, but the remission, of our sins, and to the salutary preparation for the participation in eternal beatitude.” These things being perceived by them,

they were able to answer nothing, and thenceforth, with perception of the saving mystery, they observed the acknowledged institutions of the Church.

16. Besides this, in certain places of the Scots, there were some who, contrary to the custom of the whole Church, were wont to celebrate Masses with I know not what barbarous rites, which the Queen, burning with the zeal of God, sought so to destroy and annihilate, that none among all the nation of the Scots should thenceforth presume to do such a thing. There were also some who were wont, neglecting the reverence due to the day of the Lord, to insist on earthly labours being gone on with on those days as on other days; which she showed them was not lawful either by reason or authority. "For," said she, "let us hold the Lord's Day in reverence, because of the Resurrection of the Lord, which happened on that day; and on that day on which we know we were redeemed from the bondage of the devil, let us do no servile work." For this also the blessed Pope Gregory affirms, saying, "on the Lord's Day we are to cease from work, and are to be earnest in prayers; that if anything has been neglected through the six days, on the day of the Resur-

rection of the Lord it may be expiated." Also the same Father Gregory having severely reprov'd one who had done earthly work on the Lord's Day, she decreed that those who had thus acted should be excommunicated for two months. Not being able to resist these reasons of the wise Queen, after this they kept the reverence due to the Lord's days at her command, so that no one dared on those days carry any burden, or compel another to do so. She showed also how execrable was the marriage of a man with his step-mother, or with the wife of his defunct brother, which had before been practised, and how those things were to be avoided by the faithful more than death itself. Many other things also, contrary to the rule of faith and the ecclesiastical institutions, she caused to be condemned in that Council, and to be thrust out of the kingdom. For all those things which she proposed, she so corroborated by the testimony of the Holy Scriptures, and the decisions of the Holy Fathers, that nothing was to be said in reply; so that laying aside their opposition and acquiescing in her steadfast reason, they undertook to fulfil all things.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHARITY OF MARGARET TOWARDS THE POOR—HER LENTS
—HER LOVE OF PRAYER.

17. THUS this admirable Queen who sought, God helping her, to purify the House of God from evil and errors, was herself indeed worthy to be made from day to day a Temple of God, which I truly have best known, since I both saw her external works, and knew her inner conscience as she manifested it to me. For to me she condescended to speak most intimately, and to open the secrets of her heart; not because there was anything good in me, but because she thought so. For with me she spoke of the salvation of the soul, and of the sweetness of the perennial life. Words full of all grace she uttered, which indeed the Holy Spirit, indwelling in her heart, spoke through her mouth. But with such compunction did she speak that it seemed as if she would melt away with tears; and with her tears she moved me to weep. Beyond all mortal creatures that I have known she was given to prayer and fasting, and to works of mercy and charity. If I speak first of prayer, in church no one was more quiet than she was, in silence, but

in prayer no one more intent. Never saying anything secular in the house of God, never doing anything of earth, her only wont was to pray, and praying to pour forth tears, being only corporeally on earth, but in her mind close to God; for besides God and the things of God her pure prayers sought nothing. But what shall I say of her fasting, unless that by too much abstinence she incurred the trouble of serious infirmity?

18. To these two—that is, prayer and abstinence—she joined the benefactions of mercy. What was ever tenderer than that heart, or kinder to those in need? Not only what was hers, but her very self, if possible, she would give freely to the poor. She herself was poorer than all her poor; for they, not having, desired to have; but she who had, sought to dispossess herself of what she had. When she was walking or riding in public, flocks of miserable people, of orphans, and widows flowed together to her as to a most tender mother, of whom none went away without consolation. And when she had distributed all that she carried with her for the use of the needy, she was wont to accept garments or anything from any rich people who were attending her, to

give to the poor, lest any needy one should go away sad. Nor did those with her think this a trouble; they rather strove with each other to offer what they had to her; since they knew certainly that she would restore twofold. Sometimes also she carried off the private possessions of the King to bestow on the needy; which pious rapine he always found acceptable and pleasant. For since he was wont himself to offer gold coins on Maundy Thursday and at the Mass, she had a habit of often stealing some of these to give to some poor creature who appealed to her. And often indeed, when the King came to know it, pretending nevertheless not to know, he had great delight in thefts of this kind; but now and then, being caught with the coins in her hand, laughing he would say, "By my sentence, she is found guilty." Nor was it only to the destitute natives of this country, but to those of all nations, drawing near at the fame of her mercy, that with gladness of heart she would manifest the largeness of her munificence. It is allowed us to say of her, "She has dispersed abroad; she has given to the poor; her righteousness remaineth for ever."

19. But who could unfold in detail whom and

how many she restored to freedom by paying their ransom, of those from the nation of the English whom the violence of their enemies had reduced to slavery? For indeed she sent messengers to search secretly throughout all the provinces of the Scots, for the express purpose of finding out who among the captives were bound down with the hardest bondage and most inhumanly treated, that they might bring back word to her where and by whom they were thus afflicted; and to such, she, out of the deep compassion of her heart, hastened swiftly to give help, and to release them and restore them to liberty.

At that time there were in the kingdom of the Scots, in diverse places, secluded in separate cells, many who lived in great severity of life, not according to the flesh, for they led while on this earth a truly angelical life. These the Queen delighted to honour and to love, venerating Christ in them; and often she would visit and converse with them and commend herself to their prayers. And when she could not prevail on them to accept anything earthly from her, she would humbly entreat that they would deign to employ her in doing some work of mercy. Nor would anything hinder her: whatever they desired this devoted

woman would fulfil to her utmost, whether it were to relieve the poor from their need, or to lift up any afflicted ones from the troubles with which they were oppressed.

20. And since the church of St. Andrews was much frequented for religious devotion by people coming from all sides, she built little dwellings on both sides of the Frith, which divides Lothian from Scotland, that after the toils of the journey, pilgrims and poor people might be able to turn aside there and rest, and might find there all things ready that are necessary for the refreshment of the body. She also appointed servants to be there for the sole purpose of providing what was necessary for all who came, and that they should minister to them with great attention. For this purpose she also assigned boats to these servants that they might ferry those who came and went across, and never exact any payment from them for the passage.¹

21. Having thus unfolded the daily life of this venerated Queen, and also said something of her daily works of mercy, I will now try briefly to tell something of the way in which she used to pass her time in the forty days before Christmas,

¹ Queensferry.

and throughout Lent. When she had reposed a little at the beginning of the night, she went into the church, and there, alone, went through the Matin offices of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Cross, and of St. Mary; these finished, she began the offices for the dead; after which she commenced the Psalter, and did not cease until she had gone through to the end. Whilst the Presbyters were celebrating the morning Lauds, she either finished the Psalter she had begun, or having gone through it once began again. Lauds finished, she returned to her own chamber, and, with the King himself, washed the feet of six poor people, and used to ask for something to alleviate their poverty. It was one chief duty of the Chamberlain every night, before the entrance of the Queen, to bring these poor people in, that when she came in to wait on them, she might find them ready. This being accomplished, she went to take a little quiet and sleep.

22. But when morning had really come, she arose, and set herself for some time to prayers and psalms, between the psalms busying herself about some work of mercy. She had brought to her, at the first hours of the day, nine little orphan children, destitute of all help, that she

might refresh them. For she ordered some pleasant food, such as delights little children, to be daily prepared for them; and when they were brought, she would place them on her knees and make little portions of pap or broth for them, and put it gently into their mouths with the spoons she used herself. Thus the Queen, who was honoured by all the people, for Christ's sake served these little ones with the lowly services of a most tender nurse and mother. It could indeed be said of her as of the blessed Job, "From my youth he (the fatherless) was brought up with me. I have guided her (the widow) from my mother's womb." While she was doing this, it was the custom to introduce three hundred poor people into the Royal Palace; and when they were all seated round in order, and the King and the Queen stepped in, the doors were closed by the servants; for except the chaplains, certain monks, and some servants, none were allowed to be present at their works of mercy. The King on one side, the Queen on the other, waited on the poor, and with great attention carried them the meat and drink especially prepared for them. Which being done, the Queen was wont to enter the church, and then with many prayers and sighs

and tears to offer herself up to God. Besides the Hours of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Cross, and Holy Mary, in the space of the day and night, on these holy days she went through the Psalter two or three times, and before the celebration of public Mass she caused five or six Masses to be sung privately before her.

23. These being finished, when the meal-time came, she fed twenty-four poor people, herself humbly serving them. For, besides all the almsgiving I have mentioned above, as long as she lived, she always maintained twenty-four poor people all the year through, whom she ordered to remain near her, and to accompany her whithersoever she went. After she had devotedly served Christ in these, she used to refresh herself. In her own repast, so far from making provision for the flesh to fulfil its desires, she scarcely allowed herself the necessaries of life. She ate just what was needful to sustain life, not for pleasure. Her sober and meagre repast rather awakened hunger than satisfied it: she tasted rather than took food. This, I ask, let this be considered, what must have been her self-denial in fasting, when such was her abstinence in feasting? And whilst all her life was thus passed in self-denial, on these forty days

before Easter and the Nativity of our Lord, she used to chasten herself with incredible abstinence. Thus, through the too great rigour of her fasting, she suffered towards the end of her life acute pain in her stomach; yet bodily infirmity never weakened her energy in good works; earnest in sacred reading, instant in prayer, unwearied in doing good, vigilantly exercising herself in all the things of God. And knowing that it is written, "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth," she welcomed pain as the scourging of a most tender father, with patience and thanksgiving.

24. Whilst she was thus given up to good works, she was also suffering from continual infirmities, that, as with the Apostle, strength might be made perfect in weakness; and going on from strength to strength, from day to day, she was made better. Forsaking in her mind all earthly things, all her heart glowed with the longing for heavenly things, with heart and voice saying with the Psalmist, "My heart thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" Some admire in others the signs of miracles, but I admire most in Margaret the works of mercy; for signs belong

both to the evil and the good; but works of true piety and charity are the special possessions of the good. Those manifest holiness; but these constitute it. More fit it is, I say, that we should admire in Margaret the deeds which made her holy, than signs, if there were any such, which would merely show her holiness to men. Better it is for us to wonder as we see in her the justice, piety, mercy, and charity of the ancient Fathers, than it would be to see any miracles. Yet I think it would not be out of place to record some things as indications belonging to a life so religious as hers.

25. She had a book of the Gospels, ornamented with gold and gems, on which the figures of the four evangelists were illuminated with colours and gold, and in which all the capital letters glittered with gold. This manuscript she delighted in more than in any of the rest which she was in the habit of reading. It happened once that when some one was carrying this precious book through a ford, it was rather carelessly wrapped up in cloths, and fell into the middle of the stream. The bearer did not know it had fallen, and pursued his journey. It was only when he wished to bring her the book that he perceived he had lost

it. It was long sought for and not found. At last it was found lying open in the depths of the river, so that its leaves were moved about by the incessant action of the water, and the little folds of silk which covered the gold letters from being rubbed against the leaves were swept away by the force of the stream. Who would think the book would be worth anything after this? Who would believe that one letter would appear? Yet most certainly it was taken out of the river complete, unstained, unimpaired, so that not the slightest trace of the water could be seen. The whiteness of the leaves, the perfect form of the letters, remained exactly as they were before it fell into the river, except that in the last pages, here and there, the slightest sign of moisture might be observed. The book was brought back to the Queen, and the miracle told me at the same time; and she, giving thanks to Christ, held the book dearer than before. Whatever others may think, I believe this sign was given by our Lord on account of His love for that venerated Queen.¹

¹ There is another story connected with a river which is worth giving, as throwing light on Queen Margaret's character and the customs of the time. A Hungarian

CHAPTER IV.

THE DEATH OF THE QUEEN—HOW IT WAS FORESEEN, AND HOW PIOUSLY ACCOMPLISHED.

26. WHILEST the Omnipotent God was preparing to recompense her pious works with eternal rewards, she herself was preparing herself for the entrance into that other life more earnestly than ever. For, as was manifested a little while afterwards by her own words, she evidently knew long before of her exit from this life, and also of other future things. Thus, talking with me privately, she began to roll back the volume of her life in order before me, and at several words to shed floods of tears. In brief, so strong was her feeling (*compunctio*) as she spoke, such the abundance of her weeping, that it seemed to me there was nothing she might not obtain from Christ. She

knight had come with the Atheling from the Continent, and was the Chamberlain of the Queen. His name was Bartholomew Ladislaus, or Leslyn, the ancestor of the Leslie family. Once when the Queen was riding on a pillion behind him across a flooded river, holding on to the belt round his waist, he said to her, "*Grip fast.*" "*Gin the buckle haud,*" she replied. "*Grip fast,*" and a belt with three buckles, have been the Leslie motto and coat-of-arms ever since.

wept, and I also wept; often we wept long in silence since our words were broken by sobs. For the flame of that compunction which was burning her heart touched mine through her spiritual words. Whilst through her tongue I listened to the words of the Holy Spirit, and through her words saw into her conscience, I could not but judge myself unworthy of the great grace of such intimacy.

27. When she had finished speaking of necessary things, she began again thus:—"Farewell," she said; "I shall not be long in this life after this; but you will live not a little while after me. Two things therefore I ask of you: one, that as long as you live you should remember my soul in your Masses and prayers. The other, that you would have care for my sons and daughters; that you would expend love on them; that you teach them, above all, to love God, and never cease to teach them; and that when you see any of them exalted to the summit of earthly dignity, all the more, as at once a father and a tutor (*magister*), you would keep close to them; I mean, admonishing, and, if needful, censuring them; lest on account of momentary honour any of them should be puffed up with pride, lest they should

displease God by avarice, lest through the prosperity of this world they should neglect eternal felicity. These are the things," she said, "which I now, in the presence of God, who is now standing by as a Third with us, entreat you to promise me you will carry out with great solicitude." At these words of hers, I, once more bursting into tears, promised to do diligently all she asked; for I did not dare to contradict her, when I heard her thus unhesitatingly foretell what was to be. For that she was foretelling this, the event itself proves; since I do live after her death, and also I see her children in lofty state and dignity. When that conversation was over, having to return to my home, I said the last farewell to the Queen. For afterwards I never saw her face any more.

28. Not long after this she was seized with infirmity more severe than she had ever before been used to, and before the day when she was called hence, was wasted away by the fire of prolonged sickness. I will tell the story of her departure as I learned it from her Presbyter, whom she esteemed more closely than others because of his simplicity, innocence, and chastity; who after the death of the Queen devoted himself

perpetually to the service of Christ for her soul, and taking the habit of a monk at the sepulchre of the uncorrupted body of the most holy Father Cuthbert,¹ offered himself up as an offering (*hostiam*) for her. He, therefore, was with the Queen inseparably in her last hours, and commended her soul when departing from the body with his prayers to Christ. Her departure, (*exitum*) as he saw it, step by step, when often he is questioned by me about it, he is wont to recall with ever fresh tears.

29. "For half a year," he says, "and a little more, she never rode on horseback, and but rarely was able to rise from her bed. On the fourth day before her death, while the King was on an expedition,² and separated by a great distance from her, so that by no swiftness of any messenger could she have known what was happening on that day, being moved to greater sadness than was usual with her, she said this to us who were sitting around her—'Perchance to-day such evil has befallen the kingdom of the

¹ The monastery where he was a monk, at Durham, then within the borders of Malcolm Cænmore's kingdom.

² The expedition into England which ended in his defeat and death at Malcolm's Cross. She had removed from the palace at Dunfermline to Edinburgh Castle.

Scots as has not happened for many a long year.' We hearing this, received it without much attention at the time; but in a few days, when the messenger arrived, we understood that on the very day in which the Queen said these things, the King had been slain. The Queen, indeed, foreseeing what was to be, had earnestly sought to withhold him from going with the army; but for what cause I know not, for at that time we did not attend to her warnings.

30. "When therefore the fourth day came after the death of the King, she being a little relieved of her infirmity, went into the oratory to hear Mass; and there sought to fortify herself for her departure, which was near at hand, by the Viaticum of the Sacred Body and Blood of the Lord. She was revived by partaking of that salutary food, but her former pains before long becoming severer, and the suffering increasing to the end, oppressed her terribly. And what shall I do?—why should I linger? It is as if, not being able to delay longer the death of my lady and mistress, and to prolong her life, I yet dread to approach her death. But all flesh is grass, and all its glory as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away. Her countenance

was already growing pallid in death when she herself called me and other ministers of the Sacred Altar to stand by her soul, and singing to commend her to Christ. She also commanded the Cross, which is called the Black Cross,¹ which she always held in the greatest veneration, to be brought to her. But when the little chest in which it was kept could not be opened quickly, the Queen, groaning heavily, said, ‘Ah! miserable and guilty that we are, we are not worthy to look again on that holy Cross.’ When however it was taken out of the chest and brought to her, she took it to her with reverence, embraced it, kissed it fervently; with her eyes and her whole countenance she signified again and again her delight. For although her whole body was growing cold, still the heart throbbed with vital heat, and she was continually praying. She

¹ This Cross was a palm long, fabricated of the purest gold with wonderful skill. It opened and shut like a sheath, and in it could be seen a portion of the True Cross. It had the Image of our Saviour sculptured in ivory, and wonderfully decorated with ornaments of gold. This the religious Queen Margaret brought with her to Scotland, and transmitted as an heirloom to her sons, of whom the youngest, David, built a magnificent temple for it near the city, called Holyrood.—Aelred, quoted by the Bollandists, *Tomus ii.* p. 335.

repeated throughout the 50th Psalm,¹ and all the while placing the Cross before her eyes, held it with both her hands.

31. "In the meantime, her son, who after his father now held the helm of the kingdom, returning from the army, now entered his mother's chamber. What anguish then for him!—what torture of soul! He stood there surrounded with adversity on every side. He knew not on which side to turn. He came to announce to his mother the death of his father and his brother; and now he finds his mother, whom he loved above all, herself dying. He knew not whom first to bewail. The departure of his sweetest mother pierced his heart with keener sorrow, as he saw her lying there before his eyes all but dead. And besides all these things, anxiety distressed him about the kingdom, which he knew certainly would be thrown into confusion by the death of his father.

"Everywhere mourning and sorrow were around him. The Queen, when it seemed as if she were already lying in the agony of death, wrapt from present things, suddenly, gathering up her strength, spoke to her son. She asked

¹ The 51st in the English version, the *Miserere*.

him about his father and his brother. But he could not tell her the truth, fearing lest hearing of their death she herself would at once die. So he answered that they were well. But she sighing heavily said, 'I know, my son, I know. By this Holy Cross, by the closeness of our relationship, I adjure thee to say what thou knowest to be true.' He, thus constrained, related to her all things as they had happened. What then would you think she would do? Who could have believed that in such adversities there would not be some murmuring against God? At the same time that she had lost her husband, she was also bereaved of her son, whilst she herself was lying tortured with sickness unto death. 'Yet in all these things she sinned not with her lips, nor charged God foolishly.' On the contrary, all the more, lifting up her eyes and hands to heaven, she broke out into thanksgivings, saying, 'I offer praise and thanks to Thee, Almighty God, who givest me such anguish to bear in my departure; and me, bearing such things, I hope Thou wilt thus to cleanse from some stains of sin.'

32. "She felt that death was there, at hand. And thereupon she began the prayer which used

to be said by the Priest after receiving the Body and Blood of the Lord. ‘Domine Jesu Christe qui ex voluntate Patris cooperante Spiritu sancto per mortem tuam, mundum vivificasti, libera me.’¹ And when she said, ‘Libera me,’ her soul, liberated from the fetters of the body, migrated to the Christ she had always loved, to the Author of true Liberty; being made a partaker of the felicity of those the example of whose virtue she had followed. For such was the tranquillity, such the quiet of her departure, that we cannot doubt her soul migrated to the region of eternal quiet and peace. And (which is remarkable) her countenance, which as usual with the dying grew all pale in death, was after her death so suffused with colour blended with whiteness, that she could be deemed not dead, but sleeping.

“Therefore, her body being honourably shrouded, as became a Queen, we bore it to the Church of the Holy Trinity, which she herself had built. There, as she herself had commanded, we laid

¹ “Lord Jesus Christ, who by the will of the Father, with the co-operation of the Holy Ghost, hast by Thy death given life to the world, deliver me.” It seems best to give the words, as they must have been spoken, in Latin.

her in the grave opposite the altar, and the venerable sign of the Holy Cross (which she herself had erected). And thus her body now rests in the place where she was wont to chasten it with vigils, genuflexions, prayers, and shedding of tears to God.”

CONCLUSION.

It has been said that to draw the true lessons of hope from history, we must take long ranges of vision; we must have broad horizons.

“For while the tired waves vainly breaking
 Seem here no painful inch to gain,
 Far back through creeks and inlets making,
 Comes silent, flooding in, the main.
 And not by eastern windows only,
 When daylight comes, comes in the light,
 In front the sun climbs slow,—how slowly!
 But westward, look, the land is light.”¹

The history of the long range of the centuries we have been glancing through is surely full of inspiration and encouragement. Again and

¹ The first lines of that glorious Song of Hope must be given also—

“Say not, the struggle nought availeth,
 The labour and the words are vain;
 The enemy faints not, nor faileth,
 And as things have been, they remain.
 If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars;
 It may be in yon smoke concealed;
 Your comrades chase e’en now the fliers,
 And, but for you, possess the field.”—ARTHUR CLOUGH.

again—"the tired waves, vainly breaking," have seemed "no painful inch to gain." Again and again the best men have retreated from what was apparently a lost battle; again and again it is not the best men who have won even in the best causes, and yet in the end the best causes have advanced. *Hora novissima, tempora pessima*, is no new lament.

Colman went mournfully back from the land which had to all appearance ungratefully rejected him, bearing with him the bones of Aidan, the man of whom Bede (who thought him greatly mistaken in some things) wrote that "to the utmost of his power he took care to fulfil all things in the apostolical and prophetic writings." St. Wilfrid won the day against Aidan's disciples—Wilfrid, of whom Montalembert, who rejoices in his victory, nevertheless writes (in reference to his influence in separating St. Etheldreda from her husband)—"It is happily certain that no one, to-day, in the Catholic Church, would have authorized or approved his conduct." And yet the adoption of the Roman time of Easter, and the incorporation of the English Church with the rest of Christendom, led to the unity not only of the English Church, but of the English State,

so necessary for England herself, so necessary for Christendom. For storms were gathering over England and Europe, which neither Colman nor Wilfrid could foresee; a glacial epoch of icebergs rushing down from the Northern seas; a volcanic eruption in the Arabian deserts, sweeping away in its fiery current the civilizations and the Churches of the East, and flooding Europe to its centre, creeping with resistless, scorching force by Africa and Spain to the heart of France. Patrick, Columba, and Columban could not foresee the ravages of the Norsemen, or the conquests of the Moslem. But in the far West they were unconsciously storing up weapons, and enkindling hearts, for the warfare of the Cross which was to beat them back. Colman, mournfully retiring as from a lost field, could not foresee the Danes, or Mohammed; but the battle, which must have seemed to Colman a defeat, was really consolidating the forces of England and Europe into the unity needed to withstand the coming floods."

The "eyes as a flame of fire," which see and guide those who are fighting for Him, (and cannot foresee,) saw that (as Bede the opponent of Colman wrote) "the object which they had in

view was the same, *that is, the redemption of mankind.*"

"*Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid,*" echoes back from every century, when the sum of its apparent defeats and its real victories is reckoned up. Those words, we know, were first spoken to the disciples about to forsake Him and flee; from the heart so soon to be "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" so soon to be broken on the Cross; spoken by the lips so soon from the Cross royally to open Paradise to the penitent; so soon to say in the joy of Resurrection, as the Great Shepherd, "Feed My sheep."

Again and again the words have been needed, and have been spoken, "*Ye believe in God, believe also in Me.*"

For He who spoke them is always here, no mere Historic Founder, but a living Presence with His Church, "all the days to the end of the world."

Let us not be afraid of the past or the future; of love of liberty, or of reverence for authority. The two tendencies are always there, and always will be there; with their diverse uses and their several dangers.

Those who, being free, move on and make progress, are sure to differ and divide. Those who agree and keep still and hold the positions already won, are certainly apt to go to sleep, and let what is won crumble and go to ruin.

We cannot, thank God, suppress each other in Church or State, although we cannot, on the other hand, always like each other's ways.

It is remarkable how in the contemporary histories of the nations around us now, two opposite tendencies seem at work. There is the tendency to consolidate many small States into a few great States or Empires. And there is, on the other hand, the tendency to develop the smaller nationalities. The age which has witnessed the creation of the German Empire, and is witnessing the advance of the British Empire (to say nothing of other consolidations and centralizations), is also seeing a fresh awakening of keen and intense national feeling in the smaller nations, such as Bohemia, Portugal, or the Celtic races, manifesting itself in the revival of national literatures and customs and affinities. In this also, let us not try to suppress each other (thank God we cannot!) politically, nationally, ecclesiastically, "lest one good custom should

corrupt the world." In this material world with its infinite varieties and continual variations; in our human race with its countless diversities, the reign of uniformity and universal dullness shall never be. That is only possible in inorganic nature, and not even there as long as fire and water counterwork and interact.

The moon may lose her fire and water, and become dead. But the sun still burns and shines on, consuming itself, and therefore giving light and heat to all.

And if the sun cools, if heaven and earth pass away, "the words of Christ shall never pass away," for they are morally and spiritually and therefore eternally true; and they are eternally *creative* words. The Light of the World, and the Light of every man that cometh into the world, shall never grow cold or fade. Nine centuries have passed away since the last of the Saints spoken of in these pages entered into joy. Moon after moon of reflected light may indeed grow cold. Colman went away sorrowful from the land that he had so faithfully served. The Benedictines who followed him became great landlords and depositaries of books, and ceased to be great Missionaries. The Franciscans, who

followed these, and "made a religious revolution in the towns," and revived the faith through the whole country, themselves needed reform again and again. Yet "still comes, flooding in, the main," because it is no mere impersonal tide of life that is ebbing and flowing around us, but the personal Presence of Eternal Love. The Abbess Hilda might mourn the vanishing of her familiar teachers, the passing away of the holiest she had known into other lands. But the lesson they had taught lived on, and the great English literature whose first springs she watched and helped to unseal through Cædmon, flowed on to Shakespeare, and flows on in Tennyson and Browning to-day.

Bede the Benedictine died translating the Gospels—the Gospel of St. John (whom the Celtic Church called "St. John of the Breast"), not into Latin for the priests, but into English for the people.

Wycliffe translated the whole of the Sacred Scriptures for the people, and spread them into cottages and villages through every corner of the land.

The English Reformation, over which so many of the best Englishmen broke their hearts on

opposite sides, and in which the best results often seemed not to be brought about by the best men, nevertheless gave the English Bible, and kept it for ever open to all English-speaking races; and in its especial Anglican form (which nevertheless troubled the consciences of some of the most fervent Reformers of the time) has preserved for the nation the Liturgy hallowed by the use of ages, and through it the priceless inheritance of a solemn and simple Common Prayer in the mother tongue.

Of England it can indeed never be said, "The Book whose teaching has changed the face of the world; the Book that is found everywhere and every day; the Book that God has placed in the foundations of the Church, the *Gospel*, is rarely read"; or "the habit of reading the Holy Gospels has almost entirely disappeared from the home" (*le foyer catholique*).¹

Thank God, "the spirit of liberty, the spirit of the family, the spirit of religion, the three fundamental bases of all human society worthy of the name," are preserved among us to-day.

To-day Saints as true as Patrick and Columba

¹ *Les Saints Evangiles, Traduction Nouvelle*, par Henri Lasserre.

and Aidan are still given us; for instance, the little girl, who at twelve years old, seeing a poor drunken man guarded through the street by the police, and mocked at by the crowd, thought only how lonely he must be, and walked along the street beside him with her hoop and stick—and afterwards spent her whole life in walking beside the lowest and lowliest to save them—has but just left us.¹

And still we have Martyrs as devoted as Boniface. Many amongst us have touched the hands and heard the voices of men who, in Africa, in India, in the South Seas, have given their lives for Christ the Redeemer, and to carry on His redemption of the world.

Tria juncta in uno,—Celt and Saxon (if we are to be allowed still to use the old-fashioned names), fiery and tender Columba, glowing Aidan, wise and loving Bede, queenly Brigid and Hilda, brave and statesmanlike Boniface, and gentle and winning Margaret,—all these varied types of character and gift, are with us still. May they be ever with us; may we henceforth, more than ever, work together for the good of each other and the world, none separating us or making us afraid!

¹ Catharine Booth.

He whose service united us through all these past centuries to help and bless each other and Europe,—He and He only can and will unite us still.

For we must remember that the mottoes of the two Knightly Orders of the Bath, *Tria juncta in uno*: and of St. Patrick, *Quis Separabit?* had originally, and have ever, a deeper meaning and purpose than any mere national sympathy, however beautiful and fruitful.

Tria juncta in uno, meant originally the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: Eternal Love; and “if the world is ruled by perfect love,” how can our hearts be troubled or afraid for any past, or at any future? That promise of inexhaustible power and peace was followed in a few hours, we know, by the cry from Priest and People of “Crucify Him, Crucify Him!” by the mocking, “Hail, King of the Jews!” of the Roman soldiers. And yet in a few hours the Roman soldier said, “Truly this was the Son of God”; the people “smote upon their breasts and returned”; and in a few weeks “many of the Priests believed.” And to-day, in this remote island, to the utmost bounds of the earth, at His Eucharistic Feast, we make melody to Him in

the heart and say, "Thou only art holy; Thou only art the Lord. Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father."

For those whose religion begins at the Cross, certainly no despondency at any apparent defeat of good, no fear of any final defeat of truth, is possible.

For the true motto of all true union, in this broken and divided world, is *Quis Separabit?* in its oldest and its deepest use. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"—from Christ the Mediator between race and race, between class and class, between man and man, everywhere and for ever!

THE END.

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